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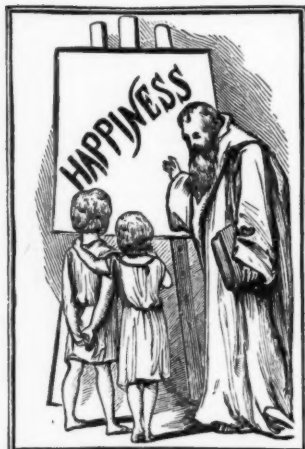
By ANDREW LANG

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and New York: 15 East 16th Street



WORK IS OUR LIFE

*'Show me what you can do,
And I will show you what you are.'*



LORD STANLEY (now Earl of Derby) in an Address to the Students of Glasgow, said: 'As work is our life, show me what you can do, and I will show you what you are.'

**'WHO ARE THE HAPPY, WHO ARE THE FREE?
YOU TELL ME, AND I'LL TELL THEE.**

Those who have tongues that never lie,
Truth on the lip, truth in the eye,
To Friend or to Foe,
To all above, and to all below;

**THESE ARE THE HAPPY, THESE ARE THE FREE
SO MAY IT BE WITH THEE AND ME.'**

What higher aim can man attain than conquest over human pain?

Drawing an Overdraft on the Bank of Life.

Late Hours, Fagged, unnatural Excitement, Breathing Impure Air, too Rich Food, Alcoholic Drink, Gouty, Rheumatic, and other Blood Poisons, Fevers, Feverish Colds, Influenza, Sleeplessness, Biliousness, Sick Headache, Skin Eruptions, Pimples on the Face, Want of Appetite, Sourness of Stomach, &c. It prevents Diarrhoea, and removes it in the early stages.

Use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'

It is Pleasant, Cooling, Health-giving, Refreshing,
and Invigorating.

You cannot overstate its great value in keeping the Blood Pure and free from Disease.

TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.—Don't go without a bottle of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' It prevents any over-acid state of the blood. It should be kept in every bedroom, in readiness for any emergency. Be careful to avoid rash acidulated salines, and use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' to prevent the bile becoming too thick and (impure) producing a gummy, viscous, clammy stickiness or adhesiveness in the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal, frequently the pivot of diarrhoea and disease. ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' prevents and removes diarrhoea in the early stages. Without such a simple precaution the jeopardy of life is immensely increased. There is no doubt that where it has been taken in the earliest stages of a disease it has in many instances prevented what would otherwise have been a severe illness.

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'—A Gentleman states:—'In cases of bilious headaches, followed by severe attacks of Malaria Fever (INFLUENZA), ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" has acted like a charm.'

SICK HEADACHE.—Onslow Gardens, London, S.W. September 10th, 1882.—

Sir,—Allow me to express to you my gratitude for the wonderful preventive of Sick Headache which you have given to the world in your "FRUIT SALT." For two years and a half I have suffered much from sick headache, and seldom passed a week without one or more attacks. Five months ago I commenced taking your "FRUIT SALT" daily, and have not had one headache during that time. Whereas formerly everything but the plainest food disagreed with me, I am now almost indifferent as to diet. One quality your medicine has above others of its kind is that to it the patient does not become a slave, and I am now finding myself able gradually to discontinue its use. I cannot thank you sufficiently for conferring on me such benefit, and if this letter can be used in any way, I shall be really glad, merely begging that the initials only of my name may be published.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully, TRUTH.

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'—A Lady writes:—'I think you will be glad to hear that I find your "FRUIT SALT" a most valuable remedy; and I can assure you I recommend it to all my friends, and the result is always satisfactory. Everything—medicine or food—ceased to act properly; for at least three months before I commenced taking it, the little food I could take generally punished me or returned. My life was one of great suffering, so that I must have succumbed before long. To me and our family it has been a great earthly blessing; I feel I cannot say too much for it. The least I can do is to do my best to make the "FRUIT SALT" known to other sufferers. I am getting better rapidly, and expect to totally recover, after spending hundreds of pounds, and travelling about for twelve years.'

HEADACHE AND DISORDERED STOMACH.—'After suffering two and a half years from severe headache and disordered stomach, and after trying almost everything without any benefit, I was recommended to try ENO'S "FRUIT SALT," and before I had finished one bottle I found it doing me a great deal of good, and am restored to my usual health; and others I know that have tried it have not enjoyed such good health for years. Yours most truly, ROBERT HUMPHREYS, Post Office, Barrasford.'

The value of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' cannot be told. Its success in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand proves it.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.—Sterling honesty of purpose.—Without it Life is a sham.—A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit.—ADAMS.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation.

Prepared only at ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' Works, London, S.E.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JANUARY 1893.

A Gentleman of France:

BEING THE MEMOIRS OF GASTON DE BONNE,
SIEUR DE MARSAC.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPORT OF FOOLS.

THE death of the Prince of Condé, which occurred in the spring of 1588, by depriving me of my only patron, reduced me to such straits that the winter of that year, which saw the King of Navarre come to spend his Christmas at St. Jean d'Angely, saw also the nadir of my fortunes. I did not know at this time—I may confess it to-day without shame—whither to turn for a gold crown or a new scabbard, and neither had nor discerned any hope of employment. The peace lately patched up at Blois between the King of France and the League persuaded many of the Huguenots that their final ruin was at hand; but it could not fill their exhausted treasury or enable them to put fresh troops into the field.

The death of the Prince had left the King of Navarre without a rival in the affections of the Huguenots; the Vicomte de Turenne, whose turbulent ambition already began to make itself felt, and M. de Chatillon, ranking next to him. It was my ill-fortune, however, to be equally unknown to all three leaders, and as the month of December which saw me thus miserably straitened

saw me reach the age of forty, which I regard, differing in that from many, as the grand climacteric of a man's life, it will be believed that I had need of all the courage which religion and a campaigner's life could supply.

I had been compelled some time before to sell all my horses except the black Sardinian with the white spot on its forehead; and I now found myself obliged to part also with my valet de chambre and groom, whom I dismissed on the same day, paying them their wages with the last links of gold chain left to me. It was not without grief and dismay that I saw myself thus stripped of the appurtenances of a man of birth, and driven to groom my own horse under cover of night. But this was not the worst. My dress, which suffered inevitably from this menial employment, began in no long time to bear witness to the change in my circumstances; so that on the day of the King of Navarre's entrance into St. Jean I dared not face the crowd, always quick to remark the poverty of those above them, but was fain to keep within doors and wear out my patience in the garret of the cutler's house in the Rue de la Coutellerie, which was all the lodging I could now afford.

Pardieu, 'tis a strange world! Strange that time seems to me; more strange compared with this. My reflections on that day, I remember, were of the most melancholy. Look at it how I would, I could not but see that my life's spring was over. The crows'-feet were gathering about my eyes, and my moustachios, which seemed with each day of ill-fortune to stand out more fiercely in proportion as my face grew leaner, were already gray. I was out at elbows, with empty pockets, and a sword which peered through the sheath. The meanest ruffler who, with broken feather and tarnished lace, swaggered at the heels of Turenne, was scarcely to be distinguished from me. I had still, it is true, a rock and a few barren acres in Brittany, the last remains of the family property; but the small sums which the peasants could afford to pay were sent annually to Paris, to my mother, who had no other dower. And this I would not touch, being minded to die a gentleman, even if I could not live in that estate.

Small as were my expectations of success, since I had no one at the king's side to push my business, nor any friend at Court, I nevertheless did all I could, in the only way that occurred to me. I drew up a petition, and lying in wait one day for M. Forget, the King of Navarre's secretary, placed it in his hand, begging him to lay it before that prince. He took it, and promised to do so,

smoothly, and with as much lip-civility as I had a right to expect. But the careless manner in which he doubled up and thrust away the paper on which I had spent so much labour, no less than the covert sneer of his valet, who ran after me to get the customary present—and ran, as I still blush to remember, in vain—warned me to refrain from hope.

In this, however, having little save hope left, I failed so signally as to spend the next day and the day after in a fever of alternate confidence and despair, the cold fit following the hot with perfect regularity. At length, on the morning of the third day—I remember it lacked but three of Christmas—I heard a step on the stairs. My landlord living in his shop, and the two intervening floors being empty, I had no doubt the message was for me, and went outside the door to receive it, my first glance at the messenger confirming me in my highest hopes, as well as in all I had ever heard of the generosity of the King of Navarre. For by chance I knew the youth to be one of the royal pages; a saucy fellow who had a day or two before cried ‘Old Clothes’ after me in the street. I was very far from resenting this now, however, nor did he appear to recall it; so that I drew the happiest augury as to the contents of the note he bore from the politeness with which he presented it to me.

I would not, however, run the risk of a mistake, and before holding out my hand, I asked him directly and with formality if it was for me.

He answered, with the utmost respect, that it was for the *Sieur de Marsac*, and for me if I were he.

‘There is an answer, perhaps?’ I said, seeing that he lingered.

‘The King of Navarre, sir,’ he replied, with a low bow, ‘will receive your answer in person, I believe.’ And with that, replacing the cap which he had doffed out of respect to me, he turned and went down the stairs.

Returning to my room, and locking the door, I hastily opened the missive, which was sealed with a large seal, and wore every appearance of importance. I found its contents to exceed all my expectations. The King of Navarre desired me to wait on him at noon on the following day, and the letter concluded with such expressions of kindness and goodwill as left me in no doubt of the Prince’s intentions. I read it, I confess, with emotions of joy and gratitude which would better have become a younger man, and then cheerfully sat down to spend the rest of the day in making such improvements in my dress as seemed possible. With a

thankful heart I concluded that I had now escaped from poverty, at any rate from such poverty as is disgraceful to a gentleman; and consoled myself for the meanness of the appearance I must make at Court with the reflection that a day or two would mend both habit and fortune.

Accordingly, it was with a stout heart that I left my lodgings a few minutes before noon next morning, and walked towards the castle. It was some time since I had made so public an appearance in the streets, which the visit of the King of Navarre's Court had filled with an unusual crowd, and I could not help fancying as I passed that some of the loiterers eyed me with a covert smile; and, indeed, I was shabby enough. But finding that a frown more than sufficed to restore the gravity of these gentry, I set down the appearance to my own self-consciousness, and, stroking my moustachios, strode along boldly until I saw before me, and coming to meet me, the same page who had delivered the note.

He stopped in front of me with an air of consequence, and making me a low bow—whereat I saw the bystanders stare, for he was as gay a young spark as maid-of-honour could desire—he begged me to hasten, as the king awaited me in his closet.

‘He has asked for you twice, sir,’ he continued importantly, the feather of his cap almost sweeping the ground.

‘I think,’ I answered, quickening my steps, ‘that the king’s letter says noon, young sir. If I am late on such an occasion, he has indeed cause to complain of me.’

‘Tut, tut!’ he rejoined, waving his hand with a dandified air. ‘It is no matter. One man may steal a horse when another may not look over the wall, you know.’

A man may be grey-haired, he may be sad-complexioned, and yet he may retain some of the freshness of youth. On receiving this indication of a favour exceeding all expectation, I remember I felt the blood rise to my face, and experienced the most lively gratitude. I wondered who had spoken in my behalf, who had befriended me; and concluding at last that my part in the affair at Brouage had come to the king’s ears, though I could not conceive through whom, I passed through the castle gates with an air of confidence and elation which was not unnatural, I think, under the circumstances. Thence, following my guide, I mounted the ramp and entered the courtyard.

A number of grooms and valets were lounging here, some leading horses to and fro, others exchanging jokes with the wenches who leaned from the windows, while their fellows again stamped up and down to keep their feet warm, or played ball

against the wall in imitation of their masters. Such knaves are ever more insolent than their betters; but I remarked that they made way for me with respect, and with rising spirits, yet a little irony, I reminded myself as I mounted the stairs of the words, 'whom the king delighteth to honour!'

Reaching the head of the flight, where was a soldier on guard, the page opened the door of the antechamber, and standing aside bade me enter. I did so, and heard the door close behind me.

For a moment I stood still, bashful and confused. It seemed to me that there were a hundred people in the room, and that half the eyes which met mine were women's. Though I was not altogether a stranger to such state as the Prince of Condé had maintained, this crowded anteroom filled me with surprise, and even with a degree of awe, of which I was the next moment ashamed. True, the flutter of silk and gleam of jewels surpassed anything I had then seen, for my fortunes had never led me to the king's Court; but an instant's reflection reminded me that my fathers had held their own in such scenes, and with a bow regulated rather by this thought than by the shabbiness of my dress, I advanced amid a sudden silence.

'M. de Marsac!' the page announced, in a tone which sounded a little odd in my ears; so much so, that I turned quickly to look at him. He was gone, however, and when I turned again the eyes which met mine were full of smiles. A young girl who stood near me tittered. Put out of countenance by this, I looked round in embarrassment to find someone to whom I might apply.

The room was long and narrow, panelled in chestnut, with a row of windows on the one hand, and two fireplaces, now heaped with glowing logs, on the other. Between the fireplaces stood a rack of arms. Round the nearer hearth lounged a group of pages, the exact counterparts of the young blade who had brought me hither; and talking with these were as many young gentlewomen. Two great hounds lay basking in the heat, and coiled between them, with her head on the back of the larger, was a figure so strange that at another time I should have doubted my eyes. It wore the fool's motley and cap and bells, but a second glance showed me the features were a woman's. A torrent of black hair flowed loose about her neck, her eyes shone with wild merriment, and her face, keen, thin, and hectic, glared at me from the dog's back. Beyond her, round the farther fireplace, clustered more than a score of gallants and ladies, of whom one presently advanced to me.

'Sir,' he said politely—and I wished I could match his bow—
'you wished to see——?'

'The King of Navarre,' I answered, doing my best.

He turned to the group behind him, and said, in a peculiarly even, placid tone, 'He wishes to see the King of Navarre.' Then in solemn silence he bowed to me again and went back to his fellows.

Upon the instant, and before I could make up my mind how to take this, a second tripped forward, and saluting me, said, 'M. de Marsac, I think?'

'At your service, sir,' I rejoined. In my eagerness to escape the gaze of all those eyes, and the tittering which was audible behind me, I took a step forward to be in readiness to follow him. But he gave no sign. 'M. de Marsac to see the King of Navarre' was all he said, speaking as the other had done to those behind. And with that he too wheeled round and went back to the fire.

I stared, a first faint suspicion of the truth aroused in my mind. Before I could act upon it, however—in such a situation it was no easy task to decide how to act—a third advanced with the same measured steps. 'By appointment I think, sir?' he said, bowing lower than the others.

'Yes,' I replied sharply, beginning to grow warm, 'by appointment at noon.'

'M. de Marsac,' he announced in a sing-song tone to those behind him, 'to see the King of Navarre by appointment at noon.' And with a second bow—while I grew scarlet with mortification—he too wheeled gravely round and returned to the fireplace.

I saw another preparing to advance, but he came too late. Whether my face of anger and bewilderment was too much for them, or some among them lacked patience to see the end, a sudden uncontrollable shout of laughter, in which all the room joined, cut short the farce. God knows it hurt me: I winced, I looked this way and that, hoping here or there to find sympathy and help. But it seemed to me that the place rang with gibes, that every panel framed, however I turned myself, a cruel, sneering face. One behind me cried 'Old Clothes,' and when I turned the other hearth whispered the taunt. It added a thousandfold to my embarrassment that there was in all a certain orderliness, so that while no one moved, and none, while I looked at them, raised their voices, I seemed the more singled out, and placed as a butt in the midst.

One face amid the pyramid of countenances which hid the farther fireplace so burned itself into my recollection in that

miserable moment, that I never thereafter forgot it ; a small, delicate woman's face, belonging to a young girl who stood boldly in front of her companions. It was a face full of pride, and, as I saw it then, of scorn—scorn that scarcely deigned to laugh ; while the girl's graceful figure, slight and maidenly, yet perfectly proportioned, seemed instinct with the same feeling of contemptuous amusement.

The play, which seemed long enough to me, might have lasted longer, seeing that no one there had pity on me, had I not, in my desperation, espied a door at the farther end of the room, and concluded, seeing no other, that it was the door of the king's bedchamber. The mortification I was suffering was so great that I did not hesitate, but advanced with boldness towards it. On the instant there was a lull in the laughter round me, and half a dozen voices called on me to stop.

'I have come to see the king,' I answered, turning on them fiercely, for I was by this time in no mood for browbeating, 'and I will see him !'

'He is out hunting,' cried all with one accord ; and they signed imperiously to me to go back the way I had come.

But having the king's appointment safe in my pouch, I thought I had good reason to disbelieve them ; and taking advantage of their surprise—for they had not expected so bold a step on my part—I was at the door before they could prevent me. I heard Mathurine, the fool, who had sprung to her feet, cry 'Pardieu ! he will take the kingdom of Heaven by force !' And those were the last words I heard ; for, as I lifted the latch—there was no one on guard there—a sudden swift silence fell upon the room behind me.

I pushed the door gently open and went in. There were two men sitting in one of the windows, who turned and looked angrily towards me. For the rest the room was empty. The king's walking-shoes lay by his chair, and beside them the boot-hooks and jack. A dog before the fire got up slowly and growled, and one of the men, rising from the trunk on which he had been sitting, came towards me and asked me, with every sign of irritation, what I wanted there, and who had given me leave to enter.

I was beginning to explain, with some diffidence—the stillness of the room sobering me—that I wished to see the king, when he who had advanced took me up sharply with, 'The king ? the king ? He is not here, man. He is hunting at St. Valery. Did they not tell you so outside ?'

I thought I recognised the speaker, than whom I have seldom seen a man more grave and thoughtful for his years, which

were something less than mine, more striking in presence, or more soberly dressed. And being desirous to evade his question, I asked him if I had not the honour to address M. du Plessis Mornay; for that wise and courtly statesman, now a pillar of Henry's counsels, it was.

'The same, sir,' he replied abruptly, and without taking his eyes from me. 'I am Mornay. What of that?'

'I am M. de Marsac,' I explained. And there I stopped, supposing that, as he was in the king's confidence, this would make my errand clear to him.

But I was disappointed. 'Well, sir?' he said, and waited impatiently.

So cold a reception, following such treatment as I had suffered outside, would have sufficed to dash my spirits utterly had I not felt the king's letter in my pocket. Being pretty confident, however, that a single glance at this would alter M. du Mornay's bearing for the better, I hastened, looking on it as a kind of talisman, to draw it out and present it to him.

He took it, and looked at it, and opened it, but with so cold and immovable an aspect as made my heart sink more than all that had gone before. 'What is amiss?' I cried, unable to keep silence. 'Tis from the king, sir.'

'A king in motley!' he answered, his lip curling.

The sense of his words did not at once strike home to me, and I murmured, in great disorder, that the king had sent for me.

'The king knows nothing of it' was his blunt answer, bluntly given. And he thrust the paper back into my hands. 'It is a trick,' he continued, speaking with the same abruptness, 'for which you have doubtless to thank some of those idle young rascals without. You had sent an application to the king, I suppose? Just so. No doubt they got hold of it, and this is the result. They ought to be whipped.'

It was not possible for me to doubt any longer that what he said was true. I saw in a moment all my hopes vanish, all my plans flung to the winds; and in the first shock of the discovery I could neither find voice to answer him nor strength to withdraw. In a kind of vision I seemed to see my own lean, haggard face looking at me as in a glass, and, reading despair in my eyes, could have pitied myself.

My disorder was so great that M. du Mornay observed it. Looking more closely at me, he two or three times muttered my name, and at last said, 'M. de Marsac? Ha! I remember. You were in the affair of Brouage, were you not?'

I nodded my head in token of assent, being unable at the

moment to speak, and so shaken that perforce I leaned against the wall, my head sunk on my breast. The memory of my age, my forty years, and my poverty, pressed hard upon me, filling me with despair and bitterness. I could have wept, but no tears came.

M. du Mornay, averting his eyes from me, took two or three short, impatient turns up and down the chamber. When he addressed me again his tone was full of respect, mingled with such petulance as one brave man might feel, seeing another so hard pressed. 'M. de Marsac,' he said, 'you have my sympathy. It is a shame that men who have served the cause should be reduced to such straits. Were it possible for me to increase my own train at present, I should consider it an honour to have you with me. But I am hard put to it myself, and so are we all, and the King of Navarre not least among us. He has lived for a month upon a wood which M. de Rosny has cut down. I will mention your name to him, but I should be cruel rather than kind were I not to warn you that nothing can come of it.'

With that he offered me his hand, and, cheered as much by this mark of consideration as by the kindness of his expressions, I rallied my spirits. True, I wanted comfort more substantial, but it was not to be had. I thanked him therefore as becomingly as I could, and seeing there was no help for it, took my leave of him, and slowly and sorrowfully withdrew from the room.

Alas! to escape I had to face the outside world, for which his kind words were an ill preparation. I had to run the gauntlet of the antechamber. The moment I appeared, or rather the moment the door closed behind me, I was hailed with a shout of derision. While one cried, 'Way! way for the gentleman who has seen the king!' another hailed me uproariously as Governor of Guyenne, and a third requested a commission in my regiment.

I heard these taunts with a heart full almost to bursting. It seemed to me an unworthy thing that, merely by reason of my poverty, I should be derided by youths who had still all their battles before them; but to stop or reproach them would only, as I well knew, make matters worse, and, moreover, I was so sore stricken that I had little spirit left even to speak. Accordingly, I made my way through them with what speed I might, my head bent, and my countenance heavy with shame and depression. In this way—I wonder there were not among them some generous enough to pity me—I had nearly gained the door, and was beginning to breathe, when I found my path stopped by that particular young lady of the Court whom I have described above. Something had for the moment diverted her attention from me, and it required

a word from her companions to apprise her of my near neighbourhood. She turned then, as one taken by surprise, and finding me so close to her that my feet all but touched her gown, she stepped quickly aside, and with a glance as cruel as her act, drew her skirts away from contact with me.

The insult stung me, I know not why, more than all the gibes which were being flung at me from every side, and moved by a sudden impulse I stopped, and in the bitterness of my heart spoke to her. 'Mademoiselle,' I said, bowing low—for, as I have stated, she was small, and more like a fairy than a woman, though her face expressed both pride and self-will—'Mademoiselle,' I said sternly, 'such as I am, I have fought for France! Some day you may learn that there are viler things in the world—and have to bear them—than a poor gentleman!'

The words were scarcely out of my mouth before I repented of them, for Mathurine, the fool, who was at my elbow, was quick to turn them into ridicule. Raising her hands above our heads, as in act to bless us, she cried out that Monsieur, having gained so rich an office, desired a bride to grace it; and this, bringing down upon us a coarse shout of laughter and some coarser gibes, I saw the young girl's face flush hotly.

The next moment a voice in the crowd cried roughly, 'Out upon his wedding suit!' and with that a sweetmeat struck me in the face. Another and another followed, covering me with flour and comfits. This was the last straw. For a moment, forgetting where I was, I turned upon them, red and furious, every hair in my moustachios bristling. The next, the full sense of my impotence and of the folly of resentment prevailed with me, and, dropping my head upon my breast, I rushed from the room.

I believe that the younger among them followed me, and that the cry of 'Old Clothes!' pursued me even to the door of my lodgings in the Rue de la Coutellerie. But in the misery of the moment, and my strong desire to be within doors and alone, I barely noticed this, and am not certain whether it was so or not.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING OF NAVARRE.

I HAVE already referred to the danger with which the alliance between Henry the Third and the League menaced us, an alliance whereof the news, it was said, had blanched the King of Navarre's moustache in a single night. Notwithstanding this, the Court

had never shown itself more frolicsome or more free from care than at the time of which I am speaking; even the lack of money seemed for the moment forgotten. One amusement followed another, and though, without doubt, something was doing under the surface—for the wiser of his foes held our prince in particular dread when he seemed most deeply sunk in pleasure—to the outward eye St. Jean d'Angely appeared to be given over to enjoyment from one end to the other.

The stir and bustle of the Court reached me even in my garret, and contributed to make that Christmas, which fell on a Sunday, a trial almost beyond sufferance. All day long the rattle of hoofs on the pavement, and the laughter of riders bent on diversion, came up to me, making the hard stool seem harder, the bare walls more bare, and increasing a hundredfold the solitary gloom in which I sat. For as sunshine deepens the shadows which fall athwart it, and no silence is like that which follows the explosion of a mine, so sadness and poverty are never more intolerable than when hope and wealth rub elbows with them.

True, the great sermon which M. d'Amours preached in the market-house on the morning of Christmas-day cheered me, as it cheered all the more sober spirits. I was present myself, sitting in an obscure corner of the building, and heard the famous prediction, which was so soon to be fulfilled. 'Sire,' said the preacher, turning to the King of Navarre, and referring, with the boldness that ever characterised that great man and noble Christian, to the attempt then being made to exclude the prince from the succession—'Sire, what God at your birth gave you man cannot take away. A little while, a little patience, and you shall cause us to preach beyond the Loire! With you for our Joshua we shall cross the Jordan, and in the Promised Land the Church shall be set up.'

Words so brave, and so well adapted to encourage the Huguenots in the crisis through which their affairs were then passing, charmed all hearers; save indeed, those—and they were few—who, being devoted to the Vicomte de Turenne, disliked, though they could not controvert, this public acknowledgment of the King of Navarre as the Huguenot leader. The pleasure of those present was evinced in a hundred ways, and to such an extent that even I returned to my chamber soothed and exalted, and found, in dreaming of the speedy triumph of the cause, some compensation for my own ill-fortune.

As the day wore on, however, and the evening brought no change, but presented to me the same dreary prospect with which

morning had made me familiar, I confess without shame that my heart sank once more, particularly as I saw that I should be forced in a day or two to sell either my remaining horse or some part of my equipment as essential; a step which I could not contemplate without feelings of the utmost despair. In this state of mind I was adding up by the light of a solitary candle the few coins I had left, when I heard footsteps ascending the stairs. I made them out to be the steps of two persons, and was still lost in conjectures who they might be, when a hand knocked gently at my door.

Fearing another trick, I did not at once open, the more as there was something stealthy and insinuating in the knock. Thereupon my visitors held a whispered consultation; then they knocked again. I asked loudly who was there, but to this they did not choose to give any answer, while I, on my part, determined not to open until they did. The door was strong, and I smiled grimly at the thought that this time they would have their trouble for their pains.

To my surprise, however, they did not desist, and go away, as I expected, but continued to knock at intervals and whisper much between times. More than once they called me softly by name and bade me open, but as they steadily refrained from saying who they were, I sat still. Occasionally I heard them laugh, but under their breath as it were; and persuaded by this that they were bent on a frolic, I might have persisted in my silence until midnight, which was not more than two hours off, had not a slight sound, as of a rat gnawing behind the wainscot, drawn my attention to the door. Raising my candle and shading my eyes I espied something small and bright protruding beneath it, and sprang up, thinking they were about to prise it in. To my surprise, however, I could discover, on taking the candle to the threshold, nothing more threatening than a couple of gold livres, which had been thrust through the crevice between the door and the floor.

My astonishment may be conceived. I stood for full a minute staring at the coins, the candle in my hand. Then, reflecting that the young sparks at the Court would be very unlikely to spend such a sum on a jest, I hesitated no longer, but putting down the candle, drew the bolt of the door, purposing to confer with my visitors outside. In this, however, I was disappointed, for the moment the door was open they pushed forcibly past me and, entering the room pell-mell, bade me by signs to close the door again.

I did so suspiciously, and without averting my eyes from my visitors. Great were my embarrassment and confusion, therefore,

when, the door being shut, they dropped their cloaks one after the other, and I saw before me M. du Mornay and the well-known figure of the King of Navarre.

They seemed so much diverted, looking at one another and laughing, that for a moment I thought some chance resemblance deceived me, and that here were my jokers again. Hence while a man might count ten I stood staring; and the king was the first to speak. 'We have made no mistake, Du Mornay, have we?' he said, casting a laughing glance at me.

'No, sire,' Du Mornay answered. 'This is the Sieur de Marsac, the gentleman whom I mentioned to you.'

I hastened, confused, wondering, and with a hundred apologies, to pay my respects to the king. He speedily cut me short, however, saying, with an air of much kindness, 'Of Marsac, in Brittany, I think, sir?'

'The same, sire.'

'Then you are of the family of Bonne?'

'I am the last survivor of that family, sire,' I answered respectfully.

'It has played its part,' he rejoined. And therewith he took his seat on my stool with an easy grace which charmed me. 'Your motto is "*Bonne Foi*," is it not? And Marsac, if I remember rightly, is not far from Rennes, on the Vilaine?'

I answered that it was, adding, with a full heart, that it grieved me to be compelled to receive so great a prince in so poor a lodging.

'Well, I confess,' Du Mornay struck in, looking carelessly round him, 'you have a queer taste, M. de Marsac, in the arrangement of your furniture. You—'

'Mornay!' the king cried sharply.

'Sire?'

'Chut! your elbow is in the candle. Beware of it!'

But I well understood him. If my heart had been full before, it overflowed now. Poverty is not so shameful as the shifts to which it drives men. I had been compelled some days before, in order to make as good a show as possible—since it is the undoubted duty of a gentleman to hide his nakedness from impertinent eyes, and especially from the eyes of the *canaille*, who are wont to judge from externals—to remove such of my furniture and equipage as remained to that side of the room, which was visible from without when the door was open. This left the farther side of the room vacant and bare. To anyone within doors the artifice was, of course, apparent, and I am bound to say that M. du Mornay's words brought the blood to my brow.

I rejoiced, however, a moment later that he had uttered them; for without them I might never have known, or known so early, the kindness of heart and singular quickness of apprehension which ever distinguished the king, my master. So, in my heart, I began to call him from that hour.

The King of Navarre was at this time thirty-five years old, his hair brown, his complexion ruddy, his moustache, on one side at least, beginning to turn grey. His features, which Nature had cast in a harsh and imperious mould, were relieved by a constant sparkle and animation such as I have never seen in any other man, but in him became ever more conspicuous in gloomy and perilous times. Inured to danger from his earliest youth, he had come to enjoy it as others a festival, hailing its advent with a reckless gaiety which astonished even brave men, and led others to think him the least prudent of mankind. Yet such he was not: nay, he was the opposite of this. Never did Marshal of France make more careful dispositions for a battle—albeit once in it he bore himself like any captain of horse—nor ever did Du Mornay himself sit down to a conference with a more accurate knowledge of affairs. His prodigious wit and the affability of his manners, while they endeared him to his servants, again and again blinded his adversaries; who, thinking that so much brilliance could arise only from a shallow nature, found when it was too late that they had been outwitted by him whom they contemptuously styled the Prince of Béarn, a man a hundredfold more astute than themselves, and master alike of pen and sword.

Much of this, which all the world now knows, I learned afterwards. At the moment I could think of little save the king's kindness; to which he added by insisting that I should sit on the bed while we talked. 'You wonder, M. de Marsac,' he said, 'what brings me here, and why I have come to you instead of sending for you? Still more, perhaps, why I have come to you at night and with such precautions? I will tell you. But first, that my coming may not fill you with false hopes, let me say frankly, that though I may relieve your present necessities, whether you fall into the plan I am going to mention, or not, I cannot take you into my service; wherein, indeed, every post is doubly filled. Du Mornay mentioned your name to me, but in fairness to others I had to answer that I could do nothing.'

I am bound to confess that this strange exordium dashed hopes which had already risen to a high pitch. Recovering myself as quickly as possible, however, I murmured that the

honour of a visit from the King of Navarre was sufficient happiness for me.

'Nay, but that honour I must take from you' he replied, smiling; 'though I see that you would make an excellent courtier—far better than Du Mornay here, who never in his life made so pretty a speech. For I must lay my commands on you to keep this visit a secret, M. de Marsac. Should but the slightest whisper of it get abroad, your usefulness, as far as I am concerned, would be gone, and gone for good!'

So remarkable a statement filled me with wonder I could scarcely disguise. It was with difficulty I found words to assure the king that his commands should be faithfully obeyed.

'Of that I am sure,' he answered with the utmost kindness. 'Were I not, and sure, too, from what I am told of your gallantry when my cousin took Brouage, that you are a man of deeds rather than words, I should not be here with the proposition I am going to lay before you. It is this. I can give you no hope of public employment, M. de Marsac, but I can offer you an adventure—if adventures be to your taste—as dangerous and as thankless as any Amadis ever undertook.'

'As thankless, sire?' I stammered, doubting if I had heard aright, the expression was so strange.

'As thankless,' he answered, his keen eyes seeming to read my soul. 'I am frank with you, you see, sir,' he continued, carelessly. 'I can suggest this adventure—it is for the good of the State—I can do no more. The King of Navarre cannot appear in it, nor can he protect you. Succeed or fail in it, you stand alone. The only promise I make is, that if it ever be safe for me to acknowledge the act, I will reward the doer.'

He paused, and for a few moments I stared at him in sheer amazement. What did he mean? Were he and the other real figures, or was I dreaming?

'Do you understand?' he asked at length, with a touch of impatience.

'Yes, sire, I think I do,' I murmured, very certain in truth and reality that I did not.

'What do you say, then—yes or no?' he rejoined. 'Will you undertake the adventure, or would you hear more before you make up your mind?'

I hesitated. Had I been a younger man by ten years I should doubtless have cried assent there and then, having been all my life ready enough to embark on such enterprises as offered a chance of distinction. But something in the strangeness of the

king's preface, although I had it in my heart to die for him, gave me check, and I answered, with an air of great humility, 'You will think me but a poor courtier now, sire, yet he is a fool who jumps into a ditch without measuring the depth. I would fain, if I may say it without disrespect, hear all that you can tell me.'

'Then I fear,' he answered quickly, 'if you would have more light on the matter, my friend, you must get another candle.'

I started, he spoke so abruptly; but perceiving that the candle had indeed burned down to the socket, I rose, with many apologies, and fetched another from the cupboard. It did not occur to me at the moment, though it did later, that the king had purposely sought this opportunity of consulting with his companion. I merely remarked, when I returned to my place on the bed, that they were sitting a little nearer one another, and that the king eyed me before he spoke—though he still swung one foot carelessly in the air—with close attention.

'I speak to you, of course, sir,' he presently went on, 'in confidence, believing you to be an honourable as well as a brave man. That which I wish you to do is briefly, and in a word, to carry off a lady. Nay,' he added quickly, with a laughing grimace, 'have no fear! She is no sweetheart of mine, nor should I go to my grave friend here did I need assistance of that kind. Henry of Bourbon, I pray God, will always be able to free his own lady-love. This is a State affair, and a matter of quite another character, though we cannot at present entrust you with the meaning of it.'

I bowed in silence, feeling somewhat chilled and perplexed, as who would not, having such an invitation before him? I had anticipated an affair with men only—a secret assault or a petard expedition. But seeing the bareness of my room, and the honour the king was doing me, I felt I had no choice, and I answered, 'That being the case, sire, I am wholly at your service.'

'That is well,' he answered briskly, though methought he looked at Du Mornay reproachfully, as doubting his commendation of me. 'But will you say the same,' he continued, removing his eyes to me, and speaking slowly, as though he would try me, 'when I tell you that the lady to be carried off is the ward of the Vicomte de Turenne, whose arm is well-nigh as long as my own, and who would fain make it longer; who never travels, as he told me yesterday, with less than fifty gentlemen, and has a thousand arquebusiers in his pay? Is the adventure still to your liking, M. de Marsac, now that you know that?'

'It is more to my liking, sire,' I answered stoutly.

'Understand this too,' he rejoined. 'It is essential that this lady, who is at present confined in the Vicomte's house at Chizé, should be released; but it is equally essential that there should be no breach between the Vicomte and myself. Therefore the affair must be the work of an independent man, who has never been in my service, nor in any way connected with me. If captured, you pay the penalty without recourse to me.'

'I fully understand, sire,' I answered.

'*Ventre Saint Gris!*' he cried, breaking into a low laugh. 'I swear the man is more afraid of the lady than he is of the Vicomte! That is not the way of most of our Court.'

Du Mornay, who had been sitting nursing his knee in silence, pursed up his lips, though it was easy to see that he was well content with the king's approbation. He now intervened. 'With your permission, sire,' he said, 'I will let this gentleman know the details.'

'Do, my friend,' the king answered. 'And be short, for if we are here much longer I shall be missed, and in a twinkling the Court will have found me a new mistress.'

He spoke in jest and with a laugh, but I saw Du Mornay start at the words, as though they were little to his liking; and I learned afterwards that the Court was really much exercised at this time with the question who would be the next favourite, the king's passion for the Countess de la Guiche being evidently on the wane, and that which he presently evinced for Madame de Guercheville being as yet a matter of conjecture.

Du Mornay took no overt notice of the king's words, however, but proceeded to give me my directions. 'Chizé, which you know by name,' he said, 'is six leagues from here. Mademoiselle de la Vire is confined in the north-west room, on the first-floor, overlooking the park. More I cannot tell you, except that her woman's name is Fanchette, and that she is to be trusted. The house is well guarded, and you will need four or five men. There are plenty of cut-throats to be hired, only see, M. de Marsac, that they are such as you can manage, and that Mademoiselle takes no hurt among them. Have horses in waiting, and the moment you have released the lady ride north with her as fast as her strength will permit. Indeed, you must not spare her, if Turenne be on your heels. You should be across the Loire in sixty hours after leaving Chizé.'

'Across the Loire?' I exclaimed in astonishment.

'Yes, sir, across the Loire,' he replied, with some sternness.

'Your task, be good enough to understand, is to convoy Mademoiselle de la Vire with all speed to Blois. There, attracting as little notice as may be, you will inquire for the Baron de Rosny at the Bleeding Heart, in the Rue de St. Denys. He will take charge of the lady, or direct you how to dispose of her, and your task will then be accomplished. You follow me?'

'Perfectly,' I answered, speaking in my turn with some dryness. 'But Mademoiselle I understand is young. What if she will not accompany me, a stranger, entering her room at night, and by the window?'

'That has been thought of' was the answer. He turned to the King of Navarre, who, after a moment's search, produced a small object from his pouch. This he gave to his companion, and the latter transferred it to me. I took it with curiosity. It was the half of a gold carolus, the broken edge of the coin being rough and jagged. 'Show that to Mademoiselle, my friend,' Du Mornay continued, 'and she will accompany you. She has the other half.'

'But be careful,' Henry added eagerly, 'to make no mention, even to her, of the King of Navarre. You mark me, M. de Marsac! If you have at any time occasion to speak of me, you may have the honour of calling me *your friend*, and referring to me always in the same manner.'

This he said with so gracious an air that I was charmed, and thought myself happy indeed to be addressed in this wise by a prince whose name was already so glorious. Nor was my satisfaction diminished when his companion drew out a bag containing, as he told me, three hundred crowns in gold, and placed it in my hands, bidding me defray therefrom the cost of the journey. 'Be careful, however,' he added earnestly, 'to avoid, in hiring your men, any appearance of wealth, lest the adventure seem to be suggested by some outside person; instead of being dictated by the desperate state of your own fortunes. Promise rather than give, so far as that will avail. And for what you must give, let each livre seem to be the last in your pouch.'

Henry nodded assent. 'Excellent advice!' he muttered, rising and drawing on his cloak, 'such as you ever give me, Mornay, and I as seldom take—more's the pity! But, after all, of little avail without this.' He lifted my sword from the table as he spoke, and weighed it in his hand. 'A pretty tool,' he continued, turning suddenly and looking me very closely in the face. 'A very pretty tool. Were I in your place, M. de Marsac, I would see that it hung loose in the scabbard. Ay, and more, man, use

it!' he added, sinking his voice and sticking out his chin, while his grey eyes, looking ever closer into mine, seemed to grow cold and hard as steel. 'Use it to the last, for if you fall into Turenne's hands, God help you! I cannot!'

'If I am taken, sire,' I answered, trembling, but not with fear, 'my fate be on my own head.'

I saw the king's eyes soften at that, and his face change so swiftly that I scarce knew him for the same man. He let the weapon drop with a clash on the table. 'Ventre Saint Gris!' he exclaimed with a strange thrill of yearning in his tone. 'I swear by God, I would I were in your shoes, sir. To strike a blow or two with no care what came of it. To take the road with a good horse and a good sword, and see what fortune would send. To be rid of all this statecraft and protocolling, and never to issue another declaration in this world, but just to be for once a Gentleman of France, with all to win and nothing to lose save the love of my lady! Ah! Mornay, would it not be sweet to leave all this fret and fume, and ride away to the green woods by Coaraze?'

'Certainly, if you prefer them to the Louvre, sire,' Du Mornay answered drily; while I stood, silent and amazed, before this strange man, who could so suddenly change from grave to gay, and one moment spoke so sagely, and the next like any wild lad in his teens. 'Certainly,' he answered, 'if that be your choice, sire; and if you think that even there the Duke of Guise will leave you in peace. Turenne, I am sure, will be glad to hear of your decision. Doubtless he will be elected Protector of the Churches. Nay, sire, for shame!' Du Mornay continued, almost with sternness. 'Would you leave France, which at odd times I have heard you say you loved, to shift for herself? Would you deprive her of the only man who does love her for her own sake?'

'Well, well, but she is such a fickle sweetheart, my friend,' the king answered, laughing, the side glance of his eye on me. 'Never was one so coy or so hard to clip! And, besides, has not the Pope divorced us?'

'The Pope! A fig for the Pope!' Du Mornay rejoined with impatient heat. 'What has he to do with France? An impertinent meddler, and an Italian to boot! I would he and all the brood of them were sunk a hundred fathoms deep in the sea. But, meantime, I would send him a text to digest.'

'*Exemplum*?' said the king.

'Whom God has joined together let no man put asunder.'

'Amen!' quoth Henry softly. 'And France is a fair and comely bride.'

After that he kept such a silence, falling as it seemed to me into a brown study, that he went away without so much as bidding me farewell, or being conscious, as far as I could tell, of my presence. Du Mornay exchanged a few words with me, to assure himself that I understood what I had to do, and then, with many kind expressions, which I did not fail to treasure up and con over in the times that were coming, hastened downstairs after his master.

My joy when I found myself alone may be conceived. Yet was it no ecstasy, but a sober exhilaration; such as stirred my pulses indeed, and bade me once more face the world with a firm eye and an assured brow, but was far from holding out before me a troubadour's palace or any dazzling prospect. The longer I dwelt on the interview, the more clearly I saw the truth. As the glamour which Henry's presence and singular kindness had cast over me began to lose some of its power, I recognised more and more surely why he had come to me. It was not out of any special favour for one whom he knew by report only, if at all by name; but because he had need of a man poor, and therefore reckless, middle-aged (of which comes discretion), obscure—therefore a safe instrument; to crown all, a gentleman, seeing that both a secret and a woman were in question.

Withal I wondered too. Looking from the bag of money on the table to the broken coin in my hand, I scarcely knew which to admire more: the confidence which entrusted the one to a man broken and beggared, or the courage of the gentlewoman who should accompany me on the faith of the other.

CHAPTER III.

BOOT AND SADDLE.

As was natural, I meditated deeply and far into the night on the difficulties of the task entrusted to me. I saw that it fell into two parts: the release of the lady, and her safe conduct to Blois, a distance of sixty leagues. The release I thought it probable I could effect single-handed, or with one companion only; but in the troubled condition of the country at this time, more particularly on both sides of the Loire, I scarcely saw how I could ensure

a lady's safety on the road northwards unless I had with me at least five swords.

To get these together at a few hours' notice promised to be no easy task; although the presence of the Court of Navarre had filled St. Jean with a crowd of adventurers. Yet the king's command was urgent, and at some sacrifice, even at some risk, must be obeyed. Pressed by these considerations, I could think of no better man to begin with than Fresnoy.

His character was bad, and he had long forfeited such claim as he had ever possessed—I believe it was a misty one, on the distaff side—to gentility. But the same cause which had rendered me destitute—I mean the death of the Prince of Condé—had stripped him to the last rag; and this, perhaps, inclining me to serve him, I was the more quick to see his merits. I knew him already for a hardy, reckless man, very capable of striking a shrewd blow. I gave him credit for being trusty, as long as his duty jumped with his interest.

Accordingly, as soon as it was light, having fed and groomed the Cid, which was always the first employment of my day, I set out in search of Fresnoy, and was presently lucky enough to find him taking his morning draught outside the 'Three Pigeons,' a little inn not far from the north gate. It was more than a fortnight since I had set eyes on him, and the lapse of time had worked so great a change for the worse in him that, forgetting my own shabbiness, I looked at him askance, as doubting the wisdom of enlisting one who bore so plainly the marks of poverty and dissipation. His great face—he was a large man—had suffered recent ill-usage, and was swollen and discoloured, one eye being as good as closed. He was unshaven, his hair was ill-kempt, his doublet unfastened at the throat, and torn and stained besides. Despite the cold—for the morning was sharp and frosty, though free from wind—there were half a dozen packmen drinking and squabbling before the inn, while the beasts they drove quenched their thirst at the trough. But these men seemed with one accord to leave him in possession of the bench at which he sat; nor did I wonder much at this when I saw the morose and savage glance which he shot at me as I approached. Whether he read my first impressions in my face, or for some other reason felt distaste for my company, I could not determine. But, undeterred by his behaviour, I sat down beside him and called for wine.

He nodded sulkily in answer to my greeting, and cast a half-shamed, half-angry look at me out of the corners of his eyes.

'You need not look at me as though I were a dog,' he muttered presently. 'You are not so very spruce yourself, my friend. But I suppose you have grown proud since you got that fat appointment at Court!' And he laughed out loud, so that I confess I was in two minds whether I should not force the jest down his ugly throat.

However I restrained myself, though my cheeks burned. 'You have heard about it, then,' I said, striving to speak indifferently.

'Who has not?' he said, laughing with his lips, though his eyes were far from merry. 'The *Sieur de Marsac's* appointment! Ha! ha! Why, man——'

'Enough of it now!' I exclaimed. And I dare say I writhed on my seat. 'As far as I am concerned the jest is a stale one, sir, and does not amuse me.'

'But it amuses me,' he rejoined with a grin.

'Let it be, nevertheless,' I said; and I think he read a warning in my eyes. 'I have come to speak to you upon another matter.'

He did not refuse to listen, but threw one leg over the other, and looking up at the inn-sign began to whistle in a rude, offensive manner. Still, having an object in view, I controlled myself and continued. 'It is this, my friend: money is not very plentiful at present with either of us.'

Before I could say any more he turned on me savagely, and with a loud oath thrust his bloated face, flushed with passion, close to mine. 'Now look here, *M. de Marsac*!' he cried violently, 'once for all, it is no good! I have not got the money, and I cannot pay it. I said a fortnight ago, when you lent it, that you should have it this week. Well,' slapping his hand on the bench, 'I have not got it, and it is no good beginning upon me. You cannot have it, and that is flat!'

'Damn the money!' I cried.

'What?' he exclaimed, scarcely believing his ears.

'Let the money be!' I repeated fiercely. 'Do you hear? I have not come about it. I am here to offer you work—good, well-paid work—if you will enlist with me and play me fair, *Fresnoy*.'

'Play fair!' he cried with an oath.

'There, there,' I said, 'I am willing to let bygones be bygones if you are. The point is, that I have an adventure on hand, and, wanting help, can pay you for it.'

He looked at me cunningly, his eye travelling over each

rent and darn in my doublet. 'I will help you fast enough,' he said at last. 'But I should like to see the money first.'

'You shall,' I answered.

'Then I am with you, my friend. Count on me till death!' he cried, rising and laying his hand in mine with a boisterous frankness which did not deceive me into trusting him far. 'And now, whose is the affair, and what is it?'

'The affair is mine,' I said coldly. 'It is to carry off a lady.'

He whistled and looked me over again, an impudent leer in his eyes. 'A lady?' he exclaimed. 'Umph! I could understand a young spark going in for such—but that's your affair. Who is it?'

'That is my affair, too,' I answered coolly, disgusted by the man's venality and meanness, and fully persuaded that I must trust him no farther than the length of my sword. 'All I want you to do, M. Fresnoy,' I continued stiffly, 'is to place yourself at my disposal and under my orders for ten days. I will find you a horse and pay you—the enterprise is a hazardous one, and I take that into account—two gold crowns a day, and ten more if we succeed in reaching a place of safety.'

'Such a place as——'

'Never mind that,' I replied. 'The question is, do you accept?'

He looked down sullenly, and I could see he was greatly angered by my determination to keep the matter to myself. 'Am I to know no more than that?' he asked, digging the point of his scabbard again and again into the ground.

'No more,' I answered firmly. 'I am bent on a desperate attempt to mend my fortunes before they fall as low as yours; and that is as much as I mean to tell living man. If you are loth to risk your life with your eyes shut, say so, and I will go to someone else.'

But he was not in a position, as I well knew, to refuse such an offer, and presently he accepted it with a fresh semblance of heartiness. I told him I should want four troopers to escort us, and these he offered to procure, saying that he knew just the knaves to suit me. I bade him hire two only, however, being too wise to put myself altogether in his hands; and then, having given him money to buy himself a horse—I made it a term that the men should bring their own—and named a rendezvous for the first hour after noon, I parted from him and went rather sadly away.

For I began to see that the king had not underrated the

dangers of an enterprise on which none but desperate men and such as were down in the world could be expected to embark. Seeing this, and also a thing which followed clearly from it—that I should have as much to fear from my own company as from the enemy—I looked forward with little hope to a journey during every day and every hour of which I must bear a growing weight of fear and responsibility.

It was too late to turn back, however, and I went about my preparations, if with little cheerfulness, at least with steadfast purpose. I had my sword ground and my pistols put in order by the cutler over whom I lodged, and who performed this last office for me with the same goodwill which had characterised all his dealings with me. I sought out and hired a couple of stout fellows whom I believed to be indifferently honest, but who possessed the advantage of having horses; and besides bought two led horses myself for mademoiselle and her woman. Such other equipments as were absolutely necessary I purchased, reducing my stock of money in this way to two hundred and ten crowns. How to dispose of this sum so that it might be safe and yet at my command was a question which greatly exercised me. In the end I had recourse to my friend the cutler, who suggested hiding a hundred crowns of it in my cap, and deftly contrived a place for the purpose. This, the cap being lined with steel, was a matter of no great difficulty. A second hundred I sewed up in the stuffing of my saddle, placing the remainder in my pouch for present necessities.

A small rain was falling in the streets when, a little after noon, I started with my two knaves behind me and made for the north gate. So many were moving this way and the other that we passed unnoticed, and might have done so had we numbered six swords instead of three. When we reached the rendezvous, a mile beyond the gate, we found Fresnoy already there, taking shelter in the lee of a big holly-tree. He had four horsemen with him, and on our appearance rode forward to meet us, crying heartily, 'Welcome, M. le Capitaine!'

'Welcome, certainly,' I answered, pulling the Cid up sharply, and holding off from him. 'But who are these, M. Fresnoy?' and I pointed with my riding-cane to his four companions.

He tried to pass the matter off with a laugh. 'Oh! these?' he said. 'That is soon explained. The Evangelists would not be divided, so I brought them all—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—thinking it likely you might fail to secure your men. And I

will warrant them for four as gallant boys as you will ever find behind you !’

They were certainly four as arrant ruffians as I had ever seen before me, and I saw I must not hesitate. ‘Two or none, M. Fresnoy,’ I said firmly. ‘I gave you a commission for two, and two I will take—Matthew and Mark, or Luke and John, as you please.’

‘Tis a pity to break the party,’ said he, scowling.

‘If that be all,’ I retorted, ‘one of my men is called John. And we will dub the other Luke, if that will mend the matter.’

‘The Prince of Condé,’ he muttered sullenly, ‘employed these men.’

‘The Prince of Condé employed some queer people sometimes, M. Fresnoy,’ I answered, looking him straight between the eyes, ‘as we all must. A truce to this, if you please. We will take Matthew and Mark. The other two be good enough to dismiss.’

He seemed to waver for a moment, as if he had a mind to disobey, but in the end, thinking better of it, he bade the men return ; and as I complimented each of them with a piece of silver, they went off, after some swearing, in tolerably good humour. Thereon Fresnoy was for taking the road at once, but having no mind to be followed, I gave the word to wait until the two were out of sight.

I think, as we sat our horses in the rain, the holly-bush not being large enough to shelter us all, we were as sorry a band as ever set out to rescue a lady ; nor was it without pain that I looked round and saw myself reduced to command such people. There was scarcely one whole unpatched garment among us, and three of my squires had but a spur apiece. To make up for this deficiency we mustered two black eyes, Fresnoy’s included, and a broken nose. Matthew’s nag lacked a tail, and, more remarkable still, its rider, as I presently discovered, was stone-deaf ; while Mark’s sword was innocent of a scabbard, and his bridle was plain rope. One thing, indeed, I observed with pleasure. The two men who had come with me looked askance at the two who had come with Fresnoy, and these returned the stare with interest. On this division and on the length of my sword I based all my hopes of safety and of something more. On it I was about to stake, not my own life only—which was no great thing, seeing what my prospects were—but the life and honour of a woman, young, helpless, and as yet unknown to me.

Weighed down as I was by these considerations, I had to bear the additional burden of hiding my fears and suspicions under a cheerful demeanour. I made a short speech to my following, who

one and all responded by swearing to stand by me to the death. I then gave the word, and we started, Fresnoy and I leading the way, Luke and John with the led horses following, and the other two bringing up the rear.

The rain continuing to fall and the country in this part being dreary and monotonous, even in fair weather, I felt my spirits sink still lower as the day advanced. The responsibility I was going to incur assumed more serious proportions each time I scanned my following; while Fresnoy, plying me with perpetual questions respecting my plans, was as uneasy a companion as my worst enemy could have wished me.

'Come!' he grumbled presently, when we had covered four leagues or so, 'you have not told me yet, *sieur*, where we stay to-night. You are travelling so slowly that——'

'I am saving the horses,' I answered shortly. 'We shall do a long day to-morrow.'

'Yours looks fit for a week of days,' he sneered, with an evil look at my Sardinian, which was, indeed, in better case than its master. 'It is sleek enough, any way!'

'It is as good as it looks,' I answered, a little nettled by his tone.

'There is a better here,' he responded.

'I don't see it,' I said. I had already eyed the nags all round, and assured myself that, ugly and blemished as they were, they were up to their work. But I had discerned no special merit among them. I looked them over again now, and came to the same conclusion—that, except the led horses, which I had chosen with some care, there was nothing among them to vie with the Cid, either in speed or looks. I told Fresnoy so.

'Would you like to try?' he said tauntingly.

I laughed, adding, 'If you think I am going to tire our horses by racing them, with such work as we have before us, you are mistaken, Fresnoy. I am not a boy, you know.'

'There need be no question of racing,' he answered more quietly. 'You have only to get on that rat-tailed bay of Matthew's to feel its paces and say I am right.'

I looked at the bay, a bald-faced, fiddle-headed horse, and saw that, with no signs of breeding, it was still a big-boned animal with good shoulders and powerful hips. I thought it possible Fresnoy might be right, and if so, and the bay's manners were tolerable, it might do for mademoiselle better than the horse I had chosen. At any rate, if we had a fast horse among us, it was well to know the fact, so bidding Matthew change with me, and be careful of the Cid, I mounted the bay, and soon discovered that its

paces were easy and promised speed, while its manners seemed as good as even a timid rider could desire.

Our road at the time lay across a flat desolate heath, dotted here and there with thorn-bushes; the track being broken and stony, extended more than a score of yards in width, through travellers straying to this side and that to escape the worst places. Fresnoy and I, in making the change, had fallen slightly behind the other three, and were riding abreast of Matthew on the Cid.

'Well,' he said, 'was I not right?'

'In part,' I answered. 'The horse is better than its looks.'

'Like many others,' he rejoined, a spark of resentment in his tone—'men as well as horses, M. de Marsac. But what do you say? Shall we canter on a little and overtake the others?'

Thinking it well to do so, I assented readily, and we started together. We had ridden, however, no more than a hundred yards, and I was only beginning to extend the bay, when Fresnoy, slightly drawing rein, turned in his saddle and looked back. The next moment he cried, 'Hallo! What is this? Those fellows are not following us, are they?'

I turned sharply to look. At that moment, without falter or warning, the bay horse went down under me as if shot dead, throwing me half a dozen yards over its head; and that so suddenly that I had no time to raise my arms, but, falling heavily on my head and shoulder, lost consciousness.

I have had many falls, but no other to vie with that in utter unexpectedness. When I recovered my senses I found myself leaning, giddy and sick, against the bole of an old thorn-tree. Fresnoy and Matthew supported me on either side, and asked me how I found myself; while the other three men, their forms black against the stormy evening sky, sat their horses a few paces in front of me. I was too much dazed at first to see more, and this only in a mechanical fashion; but gradually, my brain grew clearer, and I advanced from wondering who the strangers round me were to recognising them, and finally to remembering what had happened to me.

'Is the horse hurt?' I muttered as soon as I could speak.

'Not a whit,' Fresnoy answered, chuckling, or I was much mistaken. 'I am afraid you came off the worse of the two, captain.'

He exchanged a look with the men on horseback as he spoke, and in a dull fashion I fancied I saw them smile. One even laughed, and another turned in his saddle as if to hide his face. I had a vague general sense that there was some joke on foot in

which I had no part. But I was too much shaken at the moment to be curious, and gratefully accepted the offer of one of the men to fetch me a little water. While he was away the rest stood round me, the same look of ill-concealed drollery on their faces. Fresnoy alone talked, speaking volubly of the accident, pouring out expressions of sympathy and cursing the road, the horse, and the wintry light until the water came; when, much refreshed by the draught, I managed to climb to the Cid's saddle and plod slowly onwards with them.

'A bad beginning' Fresnoy said presently, stealing a sly glance at me as we jogged along side by side, Chizé half a league before us, and darkness not far off.

By this time, however, I was myself again, save for a little humming in the head, and, shrugging my shoulders, I told him so. 'All's well that ends well,' I added. 'Not that it was a pleasant fall, or that I wish to have such another.'

'No, I should think not,' he answered. His face was turned from me, but I fancied I heard him snigger.

Something, which may have been a vague suspicion, led me a moment later to put my hand into my pouch. Then I understood. I understood too well. The sharp surprise of the discovery was such that involuntarily I drove my spurs into the Cid, and the horse sprang forward.

'What is the matter?' Fresnoy asked.

'The matter?' I echoed, my hand still at my belt, feeling—feeling hopelessly.

'Yes, what is it?' he asked, a brazen smile on his rascally face.

I looked at him, my brow as red as fire. 'Oh! nothing—nothing,' I said. 'Let us trot on.'

In truth I had discovered that, taking advantage of my helplessness, the scoundrels had robbed me, while I lay insensible, of every gold crown in my purse! Nor was this all, or the worst, for I saw at once that in doing so they had effected something which was a thousandfold more ominous and formidable—established against me that secret understanding which it was my especial aim to prevent, and on the absence of which I had been counting. Nay, I saw that for my very life I had only my friend the cutler and my own prudence to thank, seeing that these rogues would certainly have murdered me without scruple had they succeeded in finding the bulk of my money. Baffled in this, while still persuaded that I had other resources, they had stopped short of that villany—or this memoir had never been written. They had kindly permitted me to live until a more favourable opportunity of

enriching themselves at my expense should put them in possession of my last crown!

Though I was sufficiently master of myself to refrain from complaints which I felt must be useless, and from menaces which it has never been my habit to utter unless I had also the power to put them into execution, it must not be imagined that I did not, as I rode on by Fresnoy's side, feel my position acutely or see how absurd a figure I cut in my dual character of leader and dupe. Indeed, the reflection that, being in this perilous position, I was about to stake another's safety as well as my own, made me feel the need of a few minutes' thought so urgent that I determined to gain them, even at the risk of leaving my men at liberty to plot further mischief. Coming almost immediately afterwards within sight of the turrets of the Château of Chizé, I told Fresnoy that we should lie the night at the village; and bade him take the men on and secure quarters at the inn. Attacked instantly by suspicion and curiosity, he demurred stoutly to leaving me, and might have persisted in his refusal had I not pulled up, and clearly shown him that I would have my own way in this case or come to an open breach. He shrank, as I expected, from the latter alternative, and, bidding me a sullen adieu, trotted on with his troop. I waited until they were out of sight, and then, turning the Cid's head, crossed a small brook which divided the road from the chase, and choosing a ride which seemed to pierce the wood in the direction of the Château, proceeded down it, keeping a sharp look-out on either hand.

It was then, my thoughts turning to the lady who was now so near, and who, noble, rich, and a stranger, seemed, as I approached her, not the least formidable of the embarrassments before me—it was then that I made a discovery which sent a cold shiver through my frame, and in a moment swept all memory of my paltry ten crowns from my head. Ten crowns! Alas! I had lost that which was worth all my crowns put together—the broken coin which the King of Navarre had entrusted to me, and which formed my sole credential, my only means of persuading Mademoiselle de la Vire that I came from him. I had put it in my pouch, and of course, though the loss of it only came home to my mind now, it had disappeared with the rest.

I drew rein and sat for some time motionless, the image of despair. The wind which stirred the naked boughs overhead, and whirled the dead leaves in volleys past my feet, and died away at last among the whispering bracken, met nowhere with wretchedness greater, I believe, than was mine at that moment.

(To be continued.)

Reminiscences of Edinburgh Society nearly Fifty Years Ago.

WHEN Sir Walter Scott, in that marvellous MS. of *Marion* which scarcely shows a correction, substituted for the line, 'Dunedin's tower and town'—a line every reader might not have understood—the simpler words, 'Mine own romantic town,' he left the world an epithet which all readers who know Edinburgh have endorsed. 'Romantic' is the only term which fits a position which never palls on the eye. Fashions and fascinations come and go, but a city overlooking the sea, half ancient, half modern, with all the relics of barbaric feudalism and all the attractions of present elegance, built against a hill, with a rocky acropolis in its centre, and with the everlasting hills half round it, must ever, to eye and mind, be in the strictest sense 'romantic.' Whether it be as socially interesting and brilliant now as it was fifty years ago, or ever will be so again, is another question. I knew it at a time when a great intellectual period was waning, its echoes still resounding, its force not yet spent. Walter Scott had been dead ten years, but the group of distinguished characters was still brilliant, with Lords Jeffrey, Murray, and Cockburn; Lockhart occasionally appearing; Peter Robertson the wag of the place; William Aytoun just budding into poetry; Dr. Chalmers's grand head once seen never forgotten. But the group had been grander still, for the echoes told of Brougham, and Sydney Smith, Francis Horner, the 'Man of Feeling,' and others then passed away or migrated to England. There were links too of undying note with earlier generations. Mr. Murray of Henderland (Lord Murray's elder brother) had been in Sir Joshua's studio, and Jeffrey had helped to carry Boswell drunk to bed. The hard drinking of old was now expiring, but by no means dead. Some of the elder men had been born in the Old Town. Jeffrey had passed studious years perched up in the eighth

or ninth story of 'Auld Reekie,' between which and his delightful mansion in Moray Place centuries seemed to lie. The houses of the New Town—some of the most commodious that ever were built—were favourable to a society which was not hurried and never a crush; much of the rancour of politics was over, and the rancours of the Free Kirk, which were in full force, did not appear in general society; law and literature were eminently alive; living was cheap, and hospitality never more genuine and hearty. A few years then spent in Edinburgh are an ever-cherished and grateful remembrance.

The two chief intellectual stars, Jeffrey and Professor Wilson—the one nearly seventy, the other not far off sixty, when I first knew them—to be both worthy and wise, were curious contrasts in every possible way. The little lord was small and delicate and dainty in build. Wilson—or Christopher North, as he was as often called—was a splendid athlete, tall and broad; who walked farther, ran faster, and leaped higher than any one of his time; not knowing how to spend his health, strength, and spirits; fair and blooming too as a girl, with hair which had been yellow, and when I knew him laid plentifully on his shoulders in grey locks. Jeffrey prided himself on speaking 'English'; Christopher's tremulous burr would have betrayed him anywhere. Jeffrey was fastidiously neat and tidy; Christopher a notorious slut, sometimes seen in easy *deshabille*—or what his lively daughter, Mrs. Gordon, called 'a state of nature'—till late in the day, if not all day long. The Judge hated early rising; the Professor was often up and out before sunrise. Jeffrey had seldom taken part in the convivial excesses which were going out when we came; Christopher had become, and from all accounts not a day too soon, a rigid abstainer from every kind of stimulant. Both had lived their student years at Oxford. Jeffrey hated college life; Christopher adored it.

It would be easy to enumerate the higher respects in which these two remarkable men were alike. Both lived on affection of family and friends; both hated the vices of courts and of princes; both loved children, animals, and nature. No men were more reverent believers in the truths of Revelation; no men sounder in the ethics of home life. Finally, no men, each in their way, were more of a piece in individual character. Jeffrey's talk was a choice and finished performance—his words abundant, felicitous, and with a picturesque precision, never exaggerated. On the contrary, a little depreciatory undertone ran through his conversation; he liked to differ, as perhaps became his profession. If anyone

gushed about last evening's sunset, he would say, 'A few pink clouds, perhaps.' His affirmations were rather negative than positive. He would rather say, 'I should not be sorry,' than 'I should be glad.' All this, with even a touch of the artificial, peculiar to himself, and apt to be misunderstood, had rendered him unpopular with his countrymen in his youth. But he sweetened with age, success, and independence, and would say that it was poor wine that grew sour with keeping. Still, he was a proud and reserved man, and no one could better resent a liberty. One can imagine his look and manner under the following occurrence. Mrs. Jeffrey and he, while travelling in England, were sitting in the public room of some hotel, when they observed a party of three young men to be watching them, and evidently whispering about them. At length, one of the three came up to Jeffrey, and with scant apology informed him that he had remarked the name inscribed in the visitors' book, but begged to remind him that there was no such title as 'Lord Jeffrey' in the Peerage. The little man must have seldom had such opportunity for the excruciating politeness with which he explained the position of the 'Lords of the Session' in Scotland, and the title of courtesy accorded to them. His questioners could have had but small culture not to have known his personal claim to distinction.

Lord Jeffrey gave his favourite entertainments in his house at Edinburgh in the form of little suppers twice a week. Travellers passing through were invited, and friends had a standing invitation. There was not much eating and drinking, but he gave himself more unceremoniously to his guests than on more formal occasions. One evening an effusive and not very young lady, who had been touring in the Lake country, was of the party, and oblivious apparently of the connection of the name with that of our host, she was describing 'a long day' she had spent with 'dear Mr. Wordsworth.' I was seated between Lord Jeffrey and her, and he whispered to me, 'That must indeed have been "a long day," my dear.' I felt the humour of the scene, of which the lady seemed quite unconscious. And how truly it was still the same Jeffrey whose article is reported to have arrested the sale of Wordsworth's poems for years—an article, be it said, which, considering how Wordsworth oscillated between the puerile and the sublime, especially in his earlier years, will, if read afresh, strike even his staunchest admirers as neither surprising nor severe. It is as well to add that the critic and the poet had kindly intercourse in later years.

Lord Jeffrey had a little country place within a walk of Edinburgh, called Craigcrook, at the foot of the Corstorphine Hills—a good house with a regular Scotch tower and charming gardens round it, in full view of the Castle and of Arthur's Seat. Here he was to be seen in his sunniest and simplest aspect—Mrs. Jeffrey at his side, and his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Empson, and their two little girls about him. I can never forget a scene I oversaw and heard there. The children had found a little dead field-mouse, and brought it to the ever-sympathising grandpapa as he sat in the garden. Jeffrey held out his hand for it, and then ensued the most lively exclamations as they turned the little cold body over and over. 'Dear little ears! Poor little paws! Sweet little tail!' It was difficult to say which was the greatest child of the three. In his dear wife, whom he went to America to fetch, and of whom he said, in bringing her to his Scotch home, that she was 'as playful as a kitten and as ignorant,' he had found the true sharer and developer of his simpler tastes. She delighted in the products of the gardens, and distributed them to many a friend, but at the same time she set aside a certain portion to be untouched by man, and devoted exclusively to 'the dear black-birds.'

To turn now to 'Christopher North.' His was no complex character; for if ever a man was grand and normal by nature, it was John Wilson—grand in his faith, in his reverence for goodness; grand in his scorn of evil; terrifically grand in his wrath; grand, in short, in everything, as he was in his grand Saxon beauty. In writing this one feels the distinction between the grand and the great. The great man is so for some definite reason that can be given—he is a hero, or an author, or an orator—and he can be equally as small for equally definite reasons. But the things that make us, poor creatures! small, have no part in the really grand man. He may have his moods, and be up and down, high or low, but he can't be mean, selfish, or vain. Wilson was grandly devoid of all three. He was one of those men who could talk all day of himself without being an egotist. Self, to him, was only a text on which to preach his rambling, dreamy, eloquent sermons; or a butt on which to fasten his irresistible exaggerations and extravaganzas. No one was ever tired with his form of egotism, for it was the garb in which he dressed up the quintessence of his humour and originality. If there was a tale current about himself, no one enjoyed it more than he. There was one I never forgot. His eldest son farmed an estate called

Binholm, near Glasgow. It is well known that the owners, and even hirers, of land in Scotland are familiarly called by the name the land bears—a custom which has the further merit of distinguishing one Campbell or one Grant from another. A harvest-home was being celebrated, and Wilson was one of his son's guests. The assembled farmers observed the deference with which he was treated, and Wilson used to delight to repeat the following colloquy overheard among them. 'Wha is this Professor Wulson? Wha is he?' 'Dinna ye ken, mon? He is jist the fayther of Binholm.'

Wilson has bequeathed to us his talk in his writing; for the two were one. No boy could have been wilder and more irrepressible than he, and never has the boy been more happily described than by him. His estimate of that member of the human family in *Christopher in his Shooting-jacket* was the truest ever given to the world, and exactly what he would have said. 'Nature allows to growing boys a certain range of wickedness,' and he recites a catalogue of peccadilloes which shows how familiar he was with every one of them. 'Better far,' he says, 'that the boy should begin early to break your heart, by taking no care even of his Sunday clothes; blotting his copy; impiously pinning pieces of paper to the dominie's tail, who to him was a second father; going to the fishing not only without leave but against orders; bathing in the forbidden pool where the tailor was drowned; shooting an old woman's laying-hen; tying kettles or saucepans or anything that would make a rattle to dogs' tails,' &c. But he bids the parent not be discouraged. The same Nature provides a reaction. 'Therefore, bad as boys often are, and a disgrace to the mother who bore them, the cradle in which they were rocked, the nurse by whom they were suckled, the schoolmaster by whom they were flogged, and the hangman by whom it was prophesied they would be executed, wait patiently for a few years, and you will see them all transfigured' into preachers, orators, poets, painters, into soldiers and sailors, and so forth.

Wilson's forte was his comedy; his tragedy was not taken from Nature, or immensely overdrawn. His pathos lay sometimes on the verge of the sentimental; his nonsense was sometimes powerful to the height of the sublime. His fun never fails to make us laugh; his sentimentality does not make us cry. His nonsense had more sense in it than that of any other man or woman in the world; and in whatever form you might hear him or read him, you felt the student and the scholar in them all. I have said that he was

terrific in his wrath. One instance of it was still the talk of Edinburgh when we arrived. Mrs. Wilson had not long been dead. She had been much attached to two little pet dogs, and Wilson's great heart had adopted them as a legacy from her. The dogs were harmlessly following a servant in a country walk, when they were inadvertently allowed to stray into a preserve which was being beaten by sportsmen, and were both shot dead by two brothers of the name of Ferguson. The act was wanton and cowardly. The little creatures, small and silky and with fancy collars, were evidently lapdogs, and could have been called off in a moment. Wilson was wounded doubly—in the loss of the little companions and in his deep feelings of humanity for all animals. His indignation was beyond all control. He scorned all apology from the culprits themselves; and when a mediator invoked his 'magnanimity,' the emphatic reply was, 'Did I not show *magnanimity* enough this morning, when one of the murderers was in this very room, and I forbore to pitch him out of the window?' The sympathy for Wilson was great, and the offenders from that time were branded men. Wilson mourned his wife deeply and solemnly. His love for her is evidenced by a short but pregnant passage in a letter to her printed in his daughter's admirable memoir of him, in which he addresses her as 'Dearest Czarina,' and signs himself 'Your dutiful and obedient husband'—true to the German proverb, '*Was sich neckt, das liebt sich.*'

To conclude this Jeffrey-Wilson chapter, I add, so far as we may now judge, what each thought of the other. As appears from their respective writings, in which both unbosomed themselves freely, we have in a few characteristic words Jeffrey's judicial verdict on Christopher's style of writing. 'He makes, to be sure, more of a sleeping child or a lonely cataract, and flies into greater raptures about female purity and moonlight landscape than most other people permit themselves.'¹ Wilson, on the other hand, in his splendid *Morning Monologue*, having led to the subject of the supposed wrongs and sufferings of poets, 'who shed no bitterer tears than other men,' by the imperishable sentence, 'All who sin, suffer, with or without genius,' exclaims suddenly, 'Hush! no nonsense about Wordsworth!' and far from taking up the cudgels against Jeffrey's article, which he felt had been as unjustly condemned as the poet's poetry was supposed to have been, he gives the strongest common-sense reasons on general grounds why the cudgels should be laid down at once and for ever.

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, February 1812. No. 38.

I must not omit the mention of another distinguished man who belonged to Scotland and was sometimes seen among us. This was John Gibson Lockhart. He was too young—born 1794—for, as I have said, the earlier group of notables, but he continued to share the interests and had shared the labours of the younger party, whom he had actively helped in the conduct of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Lockhart was liked, nay loved, by his intimates; but a rooted shyness stood between him and mere acquaintances, with whom he was never popular. He had a way too of calling things by their right names, which did not suit all. The very conformation of his handsome features—his short upper lip and small sarcastic mouth—created a certain mistrust, while a crooked forefinger stuck out to greet you instead of his whole hand, and the stiffest of all possible backs, completed the impression. But that impression, however strong, was not true. No man might be slower to profess friendship, but none surer to keep it. He was, as is well known, a man of many sorrows—plenty of his own, but an ungrudging sharer in those of others. It was a pleasure to see him in the Parliament House, surrounded with old friends—to whom his occasional advent was a sort of jubilee—looking stately, handsome, and happy.

The society of Edinburgh could hardly be called metropolitan. It was not large enough, if that be a standard, to be worldly. People who had any claim to belong to it ran no risk of being forgotten. On the other hand, neither in intellectual activity, in the number of strangers coming and going, nor even in its then actual population (140,000 without Leith), could it be termed provincial. Its citizens were not tuft-hunters; rank alone was no passport. There was a large body of social equality in which individuality, intellect, and worth told prominently. A considerable percentage of the society were Episcopalians, and Bishop Terrot and Dean Ramsay were our chief divines. The Bishop was an acute reasoner and a racy talker; the enemy of all cant and sophistry. Some 'o'er guid' people were shocked at the idea of a ball being given for purposes of charity, and the question was referred to the Bishop. He answered it by a burst of common sense. 'I'm sure if it could do anybody any good I would dance down the whole length of George Street in full canonicals.' He was French by name, origin, and vivacity, but an Englishman by birth and education; and was wise enough to congratulate himself on the fact. Some one said to him, 'But had you been a French-

man, you might have been a Fénelon.' 'No! I should have been a scoundrel.'

Dean Ramsay was a Scotchman of the Dalhousie family, with a large touch of the cosmopolitan. His house in Ainslie Place welcomed high and low so long as they were well-bred and good. No man took more part in family joys or was more consulted in family distress. He was tenderly persuasive in and out of the pulpit, and a fascinating converser.

To the few who may survive of that hospitable society, it may be interesting to recall the names of some who figured in it. Besides those already described, there were Campbells, of course, and Forbes, of course—Lord Medwyn Forbes and his family; and George Forbes, of West-Coates House, never more accurately described than by a Russian countess as '*si bon et si distingué*'; Sir John and Lady MacNeill—she, sister to Professor Wilson, he, our late envoy to Persia, one of the handsomest of men; Sinclairs of that tall race, outsized even for Scotland—though the ladies were the gentlest and most feminine of women—the promenade before whose house in George Street used to be called 'The Giants' Causeway'; Dr. and Mrs. Allison; the Andersons of Moredun, Lord Anderson one of them; John Anderson, the blind man—no person, with kind wife, more in request; Lord and Lady Murray, she a Rigby born; Swintons, of Inverleith Place; Smiths, of Dounce Terrace; Monros; Edmund Logan; Hercules Robertson, afterwards Lord Benholme; Mrs. Outram, mother of Sir James; Mrs. Henshawe Jones, English, the friend of friends; Mrs. Atkinson, English too, the beautiful mother of three beautiful girls. To my reader these are names and nothing more; to the writer, symbols of never-forgotten kindness, and in some instances of things higher and dearer still.

In this community there was no lack of representatives of the racy, original old Scotch lady. Miss Stirling Graham, of Duntrune, a descendant of Claverhouse, who had hoaxed Lord Jeffrey by passing herself off as a client anxious for his legal advice, keeping him from his dinner with long 'haverings' stories in the broadest Scotch, and ending by asking the dainty little gentleman where she could procure 'a set of *fausse teeth*'—'the most tiresome old woman,' he protested, he had ever met with.

Also, dear 'Aunt Harriet Swinton,' racy and original, but not so well known; and thirdly, Mrs. Outram, already mentioned, with the sense of her age and the sauciness of fifteen—a pun always at her call—the worthy mother of her heroic son, herself

deserving to be called by the name I once heard old Lady Morley apply to Florence Nightingale, viz. 'a shero,' which I need not, surely, explain.

Of course every form of social amusement was to be found in a community of culture and comparative wealth. No millionaire, fortunately, to upset the balance. There was a theatre, and a star like Rachel was well attended; but the Scotch are not playgoers. And there were fine public orchestral concerts, where Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn awakened those instincts which only grand concerted music can satisfy. I need not say that that particular form of entertainment where people are invited to eat and drink and talk was as popular in Edinburgh as elsewhere. But the difference between London and our northern capital was this, that even an unpretending evening party, without eating and drinking, and without much talk, and with only that sober institution called 'a little music,' was popular. In London such humble attempts, unless professional stars are included, are voted bores. But there is usually some common sense at the root of all social usages. London men, who have been busier all day than any other men in the world, are eager to hear their own voices and those of their fellow-creatures, and impatient of being planted on a chair, however comfortable. The best thing, therefore, a London hostess can do, who is 'At home,' if she wishes for success, is to clear her decks, and give people space to circulate and to give tongue; only she must have plenty of them. Edinburgh had not advanced so far as this nearly fifty years ago. But then, the private music she offered, whether vocal or instrumental, was first-rate. No second Charlotte Monro, the leader of both—and the very Muse herself—to be found anywhere else; who with her voice and two hands would give you the general effect of an orchestra—fiddles, flutes, and trombones heard in their places—till you were fairly taken off your feet. And still less was there no second Mary Gartshore (Mrs. Murray Gartshore) in this world of trial and mediocrity—a creature not too fair or good for human nature's daily food, and yet more visibly predestined for immortality than any being I ever beheld. Never shall I forget the first sight of her as she stood at the piano, with pale face and white hands and arms, pouring forth a rich, deep contralto voice, defying, like herself, all classification with usual human types—a voice touching, saddening, bewitching, but which, had she suddenly lost it, would have left herself as touching, saddening, and bewitching as before. So pure and refined was the whole person, so

supernatural (for there is no other word) was that voice, that my involuntary words on first hearing and seeing her were, 'Are ye canny?' I struggle in vain still to define one never yet truly defined; by whose side every other person looked human and commonplace—who had the natural gift of kindling the imagination, of exciting deep feeling, and of reaching the deeper currents of the soul—a being strange, but as strangely harmonious. She produced the same effect in London, though but little seen and known. Mr. Rogers, the poet, wrote me the morning after meeting her, 'To hear that lady I would cross a stormy sea,' which, of all things, was what he most abhorred.

Her occasional visits to Edinburgh—from a place midway between Edinburgh and Glasgow—were called 'The Gartshore Carnival'; where her friends and admirers came together to hear not only the wondrous voice, but also the deep thoughts, and enjoy the delicate racy merriment, as original and delicate as all the rest. I often felt that illness and the shadow of old age ought never to overcloud so rare a creature, and they never did. Mary Gartshore died young. And

She in our memories so enshrined doth lie,
That *some* for such a tomb would wish to die.

Those who remember this period in Edinburgh may remind me of Lady Murray's weekly musical parties, which gave good classic music, but somehow it did not prevent one from stealing into the next room where there was liberty to talk.

I turn to a very different subject—to a form of entertainment unheard of among the Scotch, and hardly known in private circles even in London—namely, to a private masquerade, which took place in our time. Edinburgh was exceptionally fitted for such an experiment—large enough in numbers and variety, and not too large for safety and decorum. The generous host and hostess who initiated this diversion—not that anyone followed their lead—were Sir John and Lady MacNeill, and their house in Queen Street the scene. Some of their friends were given the choice between a fancy ball and a masked ball, which were to follow each other in consecutive weeks. The choice, in other words, lay between the attraction of wearing a becoming costume, and that of saying impertinent speeches with impunity. The result was that the volunteers for each were pretty equal. We did not hesitate a moment; and to our honour, preferred the impertinent to the becoming. A group was accordingly resolved on

which would not take much trouble or wit to personate. There had been an individual in Edinburgh inculcating new theories—chiefly of transatlantic origin—of what and how children should be taught, which we had been ridiculing in no merciful fashion, and the idea was proposed of a schoolmistress and her class of pupils; she to wear an old, ugly, frowning mask, an old-fashioned dress, and high heels, so as to increase the apparent disparity of the age; the young pupils to have the costume of little girls, with smiling baby masks, with certain parts to repeat, and certain songs to sing. The plan had the additional merit of being inexpensive, the dress alike for all—little pink cotton frocks, with white tidies, and coral necklaces. It had also the attraction of being a combination which prevented individual shyness. They had, of course, to be coached for their parts, which in itself occasioned much merriment. It was surprising how the imagination consented to the disguise. Tall, some of them, and well-grown, young women of twenty and upwards looked really like girls of ten and twelve. The first tribute we received was when we fell into the line of carriages approaching Sir John MacNeill's door—three carriages full of us, ten children and the teacher. A crowd had collected, and different exclamations greeted the different masks as they drove up. With us it was, 'See the bonny wee bairns!' The entrance into a room full of masks is a new and strange sensation. You miss the ready telegram of the human face; and even a courteous welcome in dumb show means nothing, for it is intended for an unknown, and not for you. Two masks—male and female—received us in the first room, with courteous bows, but we knew our popular host and hostess too well to be deceived. They were effectually concealed in the crowd which was filling the rooms. Lady MacNeill was of too average a height and figure to have any chance of identification, but Sir John was remarkable, even in a city of tall men, for his height and stateliness. Nevertheless, we soon had our suspicions. Our group immediately created a sensation, and was evidently welcome as a diversion. As part of the programme we had been admonished not to put ourselves forward, to mind our manners, and to curtsy when we were spoken to. No wonder the little curtsies were frequent, for we were accosted on all sides; anybody can talk to a child. 'How do you do, my pretty little dear?' 'Does your mother know you are out?' Then a gruff old voice from a portly gentleman, 'You ought to be in bed and asleep hours ago.' Then a youthful tenor from a slim figure,

'Will you be my wife, my little darling? I'll give you no end of lollipops.' Soon there was a perfect epidemic of offers of marriage. I had two in five minutes, and made two curtsies for each. Not all the suitors were treated with such courtesy. Some of the girls, plucking up courage, begged to decline the honour, which was received with satirical hootings from the bystanders against the unfortunate gentlemen. As we were surrounded with a curious crowd, the mistress thought it high time to show off our accomplishments, chiefly displayed by answering questions quoted from an American work called *The Child's Book of the Soul, with Questions adapted to the Use of Schools*, which had been so generally quizzed that many were familiar with its absurdities. Accordingly, at the agreed signal, the sound of a whistle, which hung round her neck, our teacher called the class together. The first question on the programme was, 'What is the colour of grass?' Eight of the ten shouted 'Green,' the remaining two said 'Blue,' and were told they should have no supper, at which some clapping ensued. Then, 'How many noses have you?' As we were ten in number we answered 'Ten' (all in the programme). More clapping, at which the mistress shouted 'Silence!' Then, 'Did you make yourselves?' Great hesitation. Some said 'Yes,' some 'No,' and some pleaded ignorance. The last audible question was, 'Can a watch swim?' at which a stout voice from the crowd, which drowned our trebles, shouted 'No, but a duck can.' By this time there was too much noise and laughter for any order; and the mistress, who was younger than some of her pupils, in vain scolded and threatened. To do her justice, while she repressed any approach to pertness on our parts, no one was better qualified in that line than herself. A male mask begged her to undertake his education. 'No, I thank you, sir; you are much too old, and, I am quite sure, too stupid.' Another repeated the question. 'Not I, indeed! I never undertake conceited boys. I should put you into a corner half your time,' at which rapturous clapping. People are thankful for 'sma' mercies' in a masquerade, and soon learn that to turn your neighbour to ridicule is the surest way to amuse others.

After this the class was dismissed on leave, and allowed to pursue their own irresponsible pertnesses and flirtations. But, though followed by gentlemen with many a provoking banter, we were a steady set, and if one of us was seen leaning on the arm of some gentleman we were sure it was that of her father or brother, known by some secret sign. This freedom enabled us to

see something of what others were doing. A gentleman dressed up as a lady—long ringlets, *décolleté*, and all—leaning on the arm of an amorous protector, whose vehement love-making was received by her with what were supposed to be feminine airs and graces, excited great amusement. There was also a Madame de Sévigné, spouting from her letters; and a Madame Roland, in the mob cap of the time, on her way to execution, perpetually repeating her apostrophe to Liberty; but these did not add much to the hilarity of the evening. One group, evidently young also, who set up a rivalry with us, was that of German 'Buy a brooms,' with whom we soon came into collision. A broom which had been used rather too freely against us was seized by one of our class, and a struggle ensued to recover it. The crowd were delighted, and 'Here's a shindy!' was heard in several voices. A broom is an awkward weapon to brandish about, and in the confusion a baby-mask fell off. The girl hid her face in her hands, for all were as tenacious of their incognita as a nun of her veil. Our mistress, who never lost sight of us, was on the scene in a moment. A gentleman, apparently young, who had picked up the mask, and was officiously attempting to restore it to its place, doubtless in the hope of discovering the identity of the owner, had it immediately snatched from him by our watchful mistress, and was severely snubbed to boot. 'Pray, sir, give yourself no trouble. If your mask were to fall off, I'll answer for it no one would care to look at you twice.' 'Bravo, old lady!' was the response from a voice in the crowd, and hearty clapping.

Meanwhile the desire to identify our host had become more pressing. More than one tall and manly figure had been observed hovering about us, especially at the late 'shindy.' After a little whispering consultation, two of us agreed to take the bull by the horns. It is open to any lady to address whom she pleases. Accordingly two of us went boldly up to the mask whom we decided was he, and each seized an arm. Then, after a few commonplaces, we inquired, with the utmost show of solicitude, for his son in India (who did not exist), and for the dear little ones in the nursery (he had but one), and then we plied him with questions about Persia, and what he did there, and how he liked it, on which he finessed so diplomatically that we drew our own conclusions.

It may be asked how the gentlemen were costumed. The most part, including him whom we held captive, in some kind of uniform; others, we took the liberty to believe, in their dressing-

gowns; and a few in their usual dress of no character at all. But now the whistle sounded, and we knew we were summoned to sing a song—to the tune of ‘Nix my Dolly’—composed for the occasion by our mistress. But we still kept hold of our man, and insisted, having a particular motive, on his coming with us to hear it. I have forgotten the first verse, if there ever was one, so it begins rather abruptly. We sang it loudly and distinctly.

‘We’re very dry and hungry,
When will the supper be ready quite?
But though we are thinking of eating and drinking,
We must not forget to be polite;
And say how much obliged we feel
To kind Sir John and Lady MacNeill,
For having made this masquerade,
And asked us little folks as weel.’

(The last two lines repeated, and this next verse very loud.)

‘Did you ever?’ ‘No, never!’
‘See a Lady so sweet as she?’
Did you ever?’ ‘No, never!’

(Here we all shouted at the top of our voices)

‘SEE A KNIGHT SO HANDSOME AS HE?’

‘We only hope they’ll here remain,
And never go back to Persia again.

But wha’e’r may befall

We shall ever recall

The pleasure this evening has given to all.’

(Again the last two lines repeated.)

This doggerel was received with the most enthusiastic clapping, and an immediate encore demanded, which we performed with still more emphasis, and which was received with the same demonstrations—not joined in, however, we observed, by our tall man, nor by a small lady who stood quietly by his side, to whom we had pointedly addressed the lines—a double confirmation of our conviction that our good host and hostess stood before us.

And here there was a general break-up, to rid ourselves of our masks, and to take a little rest before the concluding supper and dance. Returning to the rooms we found Sir John and his lady at the entrance, welcoming their guests in their own persons, and courteously thanking us for the amusement we had contributed.

Many a merry confession and comparison of notes now followed, but no allusion to the offers of marriage! And Sir John addressing me said, 'I'll let my son in India know how kindly you inquired for him.'

'But how do you know it was I?'

'Oh! I knew you from the first, and took care to look sharp after such a giddy little party.'

'And you approved of our song?' At this Sir John looked ineffably shy, and turned to receive fresh guests.

And now that the masks are off, it is time to conclude these reminiscences. I have pored for them through the winding vaults and tunnels of memory, and these, after nearly fifty years, are what I have seen.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LETTERS FROM THE BALTIC.'

A Feat of '92.¹

LIEUTENANT MAC MUNN, his orders were brief,
 'March straight for Sadon, 'tis the time for relief;
 Your force is but small, only eighteen in all,
 Be wary and hasten, or ill will befall,
 There are rascals by scores on the scent of the stores.'

'The more, the more fun,'
 Thought Lieutenant Mac Munn.

Trilirra! trilirra! the bold bugles rang,
 Trilirra! and into our saddles we sprang;
 Our marching was slow, but we'd seen not a foe
 As we camped in the brush with the second sun low;
 And quiet and deep, that night, was the sleep
 Of all except one—
 Lieutenant Mac Munn.

At dawn as we mounted the Jemadar said,
 'Lieutenant Mac Munn, let me ride on ahead;
 With the horse I am on I'll be soon at Sadon.'
 He stayed but to catch our 'Good luck!' and was gone;
 And onward we pressed, amid laughter and jest,
 When—'Hark, there's a gun!'
 Said Lieutenant Mac Munn,

'On, on for the river!' The river—good Lord!
 It is broad, it is deep, there are foes at the ford;
 In the trench, on their knees or their bellies, at ease,
 They pour out a volley of bullets like bees;
 Another—ping-ping!—and the bees have a sting.
 'Come, what's to be done?'
 Said Lieutenant Mac Munn.

¹ In the *Times*, April 19, 1892, appeared, under the heading 'A Notable March,' an account of the way in which a convoy with rum and other stores was brought from Myitchina to Sadon. These verses are based on it, but for the speeches and certain incidents the writer alone is responsible.

And then to the Jemadar, 'Here you must stay,
And five along with you, to keep 'em in play;
Lower down we can try if a shallow be nigh;
Good luck, and we'll tickle their flank by-and-by.
You Ghoorkas, you three, quick, march, follow me.'

And we went at a run
With Lieutenant Mac Munn.

We plunged through the river—it rose to the breast—
And buzz came the bees again out of their nest,
But not a man sank, and, safe at the bank,
One shake, and, like hunters, we rushed the rogues' flank,
And they scuttled in fear, like rats, at our cheer.

'Not badly begun,'
Said Lieutenant Mac Munn.

Then out spake a voice—and no coward's—and said
'Begun!—Ere it's finished we all shall be dead.

Back, back, while we may, 't were madness to stay,
Not twice the men with us could hold on their way.'
'Oh, come, my lads, come, remember the rum,

Sadon has got none,'
Said Lieutenant Mac Munn.

So on through the jungle we hasted amain,
And whizz came the bullets' thin whistle again,
All round us they rung, every bush had a tongue,
And down went the Jemadar shot through the lung;
And a twinge and a twist, and it's 'There goes a wrist,
But still I've got one,'

From Lieutenant Mac Munn.

We bound up their wounds and we mounted our man,
And charged them again, and again the rogues ran.
'You'll follow me well?' 'We will, sir—to hell!'

And we bundled them out of the jungle, pell-mell,
And fast as they made from stockade to stockade,

Each web was unspun
By Lieutenant Mac Munn.

Night fell, and the track, in the darkness, was lost,
And bridge there was none, with a flood to be crossed,

And when we were through what else could we do
But, faint though we were, fall to fighting anew?
And still on, and on, not a sight of Sadon!

‘Good God for the sun!’

Said Lieutenant Mac Munn.

Then all of a sudden a mule gave a snort,
And we burst out a-cheering, for there was the fort;
Yes, there, not a doubt, and quick to our shout
And hip-hip-hurrahing the boys bustled out.
‘So here you are, come!’ ‘And here is the rum,

They’ve robbed us of none,’

Said Lieutenant Mac Munn.

They laughed till they cried, and they cried till they laughed,
And ‘The boys with the rum!’ was the bumper they quaffed,
And all of them swore it was worth all and more
To see the old daredevil pluck to the fore,
And England had still for working her will

So gallant a son

As Lieutenant Mac Munn.

A. H. BEESLY.

The Gentleman Opposite.

I.

THE road was dusty; but the bank was green. Robin lay back, his fair curls streaming over the grass, one hand full of cuckoo flowers and red campion, the other plucking at the tall blades which sprang around—his bright gaze resting upon a spray of wild roses above his head, while he balanced his chances of reaching or not reaching the same, should he summon energy to clamber so far as the hedge.

Suddenly he was startled by melodious laughter. A lady stood in the road, bending towards him across the narrow ditch.

‘Little Lad! Little Lad!’ she cried joyously; and laughed again. Robin stared in solemn silence.

Was she old or young? Her hair under her brown shady hat, which was tied with ribbons, had gleams of faded yellow; her cheeks were minutely wrinkled here and there, but pink and very soft; her eyes were blue—shining like big blue stars, Robin thought. He had never before seen any face so wild and strange. But he was not afraid. She looked at him, smiling and nodding, as if they had been friends long ago.

‘Just as I always said!’ she exclaimed, her voice musical like her laugh. ‘There is no such thing—no such thing as death! Why, you seem none the worse, Little Lad—you’re not even wet! She stretched forward and felt Robin’s holland blouse. ‘But where did you go when we lost sight of you under the water, my Little Lad?’

And now Robin did feel fear. Those bright eyes were so very bright. He scrambled to his feet.

A wall, long and high, skirted the other side of the road. As Robin rose, the lady’s attention was distracted. A white pigeon flew from over this wall to the roof of a little red-brick house which faced it; and perched upon the slates.

'Do you see that?' whispered the lady, pointing. 'I can guess what it is—a Bird of Paradise. There's a blessing on that house.'

'It's my house,' said Robin, retreating up the bank.

'And who lives *there*?' asked the lady, waving her hand towards the wall.

'The Gentleman Opposite lives there,' returned Robin succinctly. 'The milkman told Clara his name; but she forgets.'

The lady went on a few paces, regarded the wall intently, and turned back.

'You can't trust milkmen,' she confidentially remarked; 'they water the milk. But I've proved you of old, Little Lad. Come half a step nearer.'

She looked, despite her wildness, so kind and sweet, that Robin's fears subsided. He descended to his former post.

'The milkman knows nothing about it,' said the lady, whispering again. 'A ghost lives there. You don't forget——? But perhaps the water affected your memory. Never mind. The person behind that wall is a ghost. He came out of the great gates last—last—was it last Tuesday? . . . That accounts for the bird,' she added suddenly aloud. 'It followed him, no doubt.'

At this moment, in a distant angle of the road, appeared two female figures—one tall, one short and sturdy—running, as if alarmed. The lady glanced towards them, and laughed as at first, observing in a casual undertone:

'Poor, kind creatures! They can't bear me out of their sight. Don't excite yourselves, pray,' she cried, with unexpected shrillness; 'you'll both have fits, running in this heat. Good-bye, my Little Lad.'

She blew a kiss over her shoulder to Robin, and tripped, youthfully agile, to join the strangers.

The child watched until the trio had vanished along the winding road—the lady between her companions, giving each, apparently, an arm.

II.

ROBIN knew that the grey wall guarded a beautiful old house, a striking contrast to his father's brick cottage. From an upper window of that cottage he had seen its richly-carved gables, its long oaken porch, also carved, and shaded by flowering trees: moreover, in the distance, among its grounds, an avenue of heavy black cedars, and sometimes, under those cedars, a tall figure

walking to and fro—advancing, as from far gloom, and thither retreating, shortly, in like manner, to reappear.

‘It’s the Gentleman,’ Clara, the maid-of-all-work, had asserted. ‘He’s scarce ever found outside them gates; for all that the land, so far ’s we sees, belongs to him, except the bit this ’ouse stands on, as were bound by a lease. This ’ouse were built to spite him, the milkman says.’

‘Mammy, how can our house spite the Gentleman Opposite?’ inquired Robin, after private meditation.

But Robin’s mother was ill and heavy-laden, and she made him no answer: only turning on her pillow with closed eyes, that he might not see her tears.

Now, after his interview with the lady, his curiosity was beyond control. He scrambled back into the road and stared about him. At his left, some half-mile distant, a dense cloud blackened the sky—a cloud of smoke from the great manufacturing town whence, with his parents and Clara, he had flitted a month before. To his right stretched green fields, amid which only one house was visible—large and white, with many windows glaring from the slope of a low hill.

His mother’s blind flapped dreamily. She was asleep, he knew. His father was in the town, Clara occupied in regions unseen. His heart beat faster than ever before; but his adventurous instincts were strong. He pushed with all his might at the heavy gates in the wall. The hasps were unfastened; the iron hinges creaked; the portal moved with slow dignity. Directly the aperture would admit his slim little form, he found himself in the kingdom of the ghost.

‘But I’m not afraid of ghosts,’ said Robin aloud. ‘They can’t hurt. And I must see if it’s true.’

How strange his little voice sounded! Despite his bold words, Robin’s heart thumped yet more loudly. He stole on tiptoe round the sweep of the drive. Here, close upon him, the old house stretched long and low; the carved faces looking from the eaves, the deep porch leading far inward to a massive door.

His red-brick home and the hot road might have been miles away. It was very silent here, shady and cool. Robin passed the porch and went on round the end of the house. Now green lawns began, fragrant with flowers. An exquisite garden stretched to a stone balustrade. Three steps led down to fair paths among rose-bowers. Beyond lay the cedar avenue, its branches in black relief against the blue June sky. Overlooking all, stood another

long low front, and more carved faces met Robin's startled eyes. Half way a glass door opened upon the turf. The boy, stealthily approaching, peeped in.

He saw a room, also long and low, with a ceiling carved like the gables, carved bookcases covering the walls in every direction save one. At a table laden with huge volumes, with papers under weights of varied forms, with miniatures on standing frames, with crests and coats-of-arms on red sealing-wax, with military medals and gorgets, sat a tall old gentleman, writing very intently: his figure erect and spare, his fingers—conspicuous upon his nimble pen—long and bony, his hair white and smooth, his eyes black and brilliant; his dress, including a swallow-tailed coat, precise in the extreme.

Robin remembered a terrible ballad about a ghost with a cork leg, which was always running, running. Might there not just as well be a ghost with a pen, obliged to write, write, write? And what face was this, gazing from a large gilt frame which filled the one space unoccupied by bookshelves? The child felt himself in a world of enchantment. He stole nearer; his shadow fell across the sheet of foolscap.

'Hallo!' said the old gentleman, dropping his pen. His black eyes opened widely. 'Good heavens, what a likeness!' he exclaimed.

III.

'ARE you—are you—a—I shan't be frightened,' said Robin, with a struggle.

'Come in, my little fellow. What do you want?' asked the gentleman, recovering his self-control.

The child stepped through the open doorway, nothing loth.

'It's not true,' he said; 'you're nothing but a man.'

The old gentleman laughed heartily.

'Come here, my funny little chap,' he said, holding out his hand. 'I almost thought, at first—— But there's no fool like an old fool! What is your name, my boy?'

'My name's Robin Savile,' returned the child, advancing, his flapping hat pressed nervously to his back, his fair curls flowing over his blouse.

The old gentleman flushed a deep red.

'How remarkable! How exceedingly remarkable! And who is your father, my little man?'

'My father's the curate of St. Chad's. We've left the town,

because mammy's ill. The doctor said she would die without fresh air; so father walks there and back every day. Father's a vicar in our real home, only that is ever so far away. The bishop let us come here because we're so poor, and father thought we could save money. But I don't believe it, and Clara doesn't; and mammy cries nearly all day.'

It was a long speech, but at each pause Robin was encouraged by some sign or sound of interest.

'Ah! . . . That's all very sad, my little fellow. Does your mother care for strawberries? But where do you live, by-the-bye?'

'We live'—Robin hesitated, apologetically—'we didn't know when we came. We live at the little house opposite. We didn't know it was built to spite you, till the milkman told us.'

'The milkman told you that, did he?' said the old gentleman, looking very angry. 'The saucy jackanapes! Tell him he ought to be ashamed of himself,' he added irascibly. 'And your name's Robin Savile? The Robin Savile I knew was just your height, and you are his living image. I must call on your father. Or, stay—I never make calls. Will you ask him if he had a brother—or, no—a cousin, perhaps—or an uncle, of your name, who was drowned in a boating expedition? Just at your age—or so I should fancy.'

'I'm seven,' said Robin. Then he looked up at the great picture.

'*She* talked as if I'd been drowned,' he murmured, musing. 'Are you a soldier?' he added, with a sudden change of demeanour, as his eyes met the bright hues of regimental colours in a MS. open on the table.

'I was a soldier once.'

The old gentleman paused abruptly.

'I'm writing a history of my regiment, my little man. I've been at it, more or less, since I stopped soldiering. It keeps me busy, as you see. I intersperse with it biographical details. Here are the officers' crests, ancestral portraits, and so forth. You shall come again and see them. Just now you must help me to find a few strawberries for your mother. It was a splendid regiment—the 17th Lancers. You'll read about it in history, my boy.'

'Father told me. The Charge of the Light Brigade! I learned the verses. Did you know any of the Six Hundred?'

'I was one of them,' said the old gentleman proudly. 'I rode in the Charge.'

Robin stared, dumb with admiration.

'Perhaps that was why she took you for a ghost,' he said, as his kind friend led him over the grass. 'She fancied you'd been killed.'

'And, pray, who took me for a ghost?' asked the old gentleman, half amused, half annoyed.

'You know her. You've got her picture. I saw who it was, directly. Only in the picture she's rounder and she's got no wrinkles. But her eyes are just as blue.'

The old gentleman stood still.

'Of what lady are you speaking?' said he.

'The lady in the great picture, where you sat. Though in the picture she's a girl. I don't know her name; but I saw her, this afternoon, in the road. That's why I came—she told me a ghost lived here. She meant you. She's very kind, but so funny! She thought she knew me. She called me Little Lad.'

'Little Lad! Yes, that was his pet name. She recognised, then—she remembered! And you saw her this afternoon?'

The old gentleman had forgotten the strawberries. He dropped the child's hand.

'A ghost! Only a ghost!' he muttered, and went rapidly down the steps to the cedar avenue; and there walked to and fro as was his custom, his white head bowed upon his breast.

IV.

'So Robin pays calls!' said Mrs. Savile, faintly smiling. She lay propped up with pillows, her young face thin and worn, but happier than in the afternoon, because now her husband had finished his long day's work in the black city, and was resting at her bedside.

'Did I never tell you, dear, that I was christened Robert after a little uncle drowned ten years before my birth? I remember now,' Mr. Savile added, musingly, 'my mother's calling me Robin, and my father's forbidding it on account of the painful associations. The great shock was still vivid, he said, in my grandmother's mind. So then I degenerated into Bob.'

'You were Robert only and always to me,' said his wife—'*Robert, toi que j'aime!*' But how curious that I should have hit upon Robin to specialize this child, knowing nothing of his predecessor!'

'Ma'am,' said Clara, precipitately entering, 'please to look at this here beautiful basket. The piles of strawberries!—red 'uns

and white 'uns. And *I* never see such roses! There's asparagus, ma'am, underneath, and young green peas.'

'I know! I know!' cried Robin, capering.

'From the Gentleman Opposite, ma'am, with his respectful compliments, hoping as you'll pardon the liberty, and will Master Robin take back the basket at his convenience? Mr. Belton, the butler, left that message. A pompous piece! He wouldn't wait for thanks. He said as, if you sent 'em, he dursn't give 'em. His master, he said, would thank you, ma'am, for condescending to accept such trifles.'

'Robert, these roses are heavenly!' cried Mrs. Savile, burying her tired face in the mass of fragrance.

'I shall thank him myself,' said the curate, starting up.

But he reappeared with tidings of No Admittance. The servant described by Clara had explained, majestically courteous, that his master never received visitors.

'It's all according to what the milkman said,' remarked Clara in the kitchen. 'He can't bear no one a-nigh him.'

'You mustn't trust milkmen,' quoted Robin oracularly; 'they water the milk.'

'This 'un don't, then,' replied Clara with tartness. 'He's a most respectable young fellow. Our landlord—that's his master, Mr. Cudds, as owns the cows—wanted to run up a shed on some waste ground beyond the Gentleman's garden. It 'ud be handy for Mr. Cudds's big meadow, and there's a spring convenient for the cows—the cows, not the milk,' she added sharply. 'But no, the old gentleman wouldn't hear on it, though the bit o' land's too rough to be cultivated. So then Mr. Cudds run up this 'ouse instead, facing his front gates.'

'Out of spite,' said Robin, quoting again.

'Mr. Cudds is sorry now, the milkman says. But him and the Gentleman had had words. The Gentleman's uncommon hasty. And yet, that generous! A cart calls for broken meats regular, to be gave away in the town. It's queer he should set such store by a bit o' waste—that rough, and at the back of his kitchen garden.'

Robin heard this recital with much interest, and, the following afternoon, set forth again, secretly resolved on further investigation. Once more, making his way round the house, he peeped in upon the long room. A quill pen in the open inkpot looked fresh from its master's hand, but the master was not there. The child's spirit of adventure burned within him. He crossed the lawn and jumped down the steps of the terrace.

Presently he was in the cedar avenue. The dark boughs crossed overhead, with contrasting gleams of sky. Below was a silent cloister. He had gone some way in the stillness, when—yet several yards distant—he saw the peaked roof of a summer-house—little needed, apparently, in this sequestered spot. Farther, the mellow wall of the kitchen garden was visible, and beyond, an irregular patch instantly recognised by sharp Robin as the waste ground desired of Mr. Cudds. It rose towards a meadow, here bounding the precincts of the white house so prominent from the road. A hilly garden, not thence visible, was now conspicuous, with female figures dotted over the grass. Lower, nearer the meadow, three together walked up and down, up and down.

Robin watched them with a curious fascination; but soon his mind recurred to the summer-house. His courage faltered: what strange wood-gnome might burst forth and confront him? But he remembered the Six Hundred, thinking, with shame, how the old gentleman, who was one of them, would despise him! He clenched his little fist to hold fast his fortitude, and went forward through the shadows.

The door was open. One very small window, a mere porthole, was open likewise. Pointed towards this porthole stood a telescope, and behind the stand, absorbed in some private scrutiny, sat the Gentleman Opposite.

His sharp elbows rested on his knees; his hands were clasped with the resolution which had prompted Robin's clenched fist, as if he too must hold fast fortitude. Their great veins showed in prominent knots. Presently Robin heard a long groan. The old gentleman leaned back and pressed his handkerchief to his eyes. The telescope had tired them, thought the boy.

'May I have just one peep?' he said, advancing. 'You told me to call again.'

The old gentleman removed the handkerchief and stared at Robin. His black eyes looked dimmer than yesterday.

'You are a cool hand, little chap! Good heavens, how you carry me back! Wait while I alter the focus. Is that right? Yes, look. Do you recognise anyone?'

Robin gazed from between the old gentleman's knees, down the black muzzle, to the porthole.

'What do you see?'

The hand regulating the focus, trembled.

'I see green—and now black—it's a tennis-net. Oh!' the

child shouted with glee. 'I saw the ball fly. How those ladies are jumping! Now it's all green again—sloping. There's a path—a quiet path—under the lawn. I see three people by themselves. They're coming nearer. One's tall and one's short, and the middle one—Oh!' cried the child again.

'Go on,' said the old gentleman hoarsely.

'She's the Lady—the lady in the road—or in your picture. But they're the same, only the little wrinkles don't show here. She's talking—she's looking at me and smiling. She's looking at me, though she can't see me.'

'Looking, yet never seeing,' echoed the hoarse voice.

The old gentleman started to his feet.

—'They've gone on now. There's only green left,' said the boy.

The old gentleman covered the telescope and closed the port-hole. The little shutter closed with it. The summer-house was in darkness.

'Come out. You shall see my treasures, as I promised,' said the old gentleman, taking the child's hand. They stepped back into the cedar avenue; and he locked the door. Beyond, above the meadow, the female figures were still flitting to and fro.

'Does she live at that white house?' asked Robin. 'Are those people her sisters?'

'Come on. Come back to the library,' said the old gentleman, quickly turning.

V.

Two or three times weekly a heavy basket was now delivered at the brick cottage, with always the same message—respectful compliments from the Gentleman Opposite, and would Mrs. Savile pardon the liberty?

The basket was invariably returned by Robin; in whose visits the old gentleman found strange pleasure. He asked testily, if more than a day divided them, where Robin had been? He hunted out quaint pictures for the child's amusement, allowed him to rummage through ancient cabinets, and explore the unused rooms and long passages of the rambling house; to sit, moreover, beside himself in a high chair disinterred from an attic, and watch in silent admiration while he sketched and illuminated in embellishment of his slowly-progressing work, the *History of the 17th Lancers*.

'Were you a field-marshal with a cocked hat? Father couldn't find your name among the officers. I thought the reason might

be that field-officers are above common officers,' said Robin, looking wise.

'The real reason is exactly the reverse,' replied the old gentleman, colouring a magnificent crest enshrined in a shield of gold. 'I was a private.'

Robin stared.

'Clara's brother is a private. He saluted me,' the child said meditatively.

'I had been an officer before—a cornet—for a short time,' said the old gentleman; 'but I sold out, owing to family misfortunes, before I was twenty. Then, years afterwards, I was in trouble and very angry—with myself even more than with others; and the Crimean War had just begun, so I enlisted.'

'And the Queen gave you a medal and a clasp,' cried Robin with enthusiasm.

'That was later,' said the old gentleman, 'when the war was over and we came home. And what do you think I found? Fifty thousand pounds waiting in the bank for me! Some relations had died and left me a rich man. I felt tired of soldiering, and bought myself off and settled here. And here I have been ever since.'

'I wish my father could find money in the bank! I expect mammy 'll die before long, if we don't get any,' remarked Robin confidentially. 'She'll be happier then, so I mustn't cry, she says. If she died, I'd enlist, like you. Perhaps they'd make me a drummer-boy. Wasn't it very nice, though, to get rich all of a sudden?'

The old gentleman laid down his brush and sat back in his straight chair.

Then—as often, taking Robin by surprise—he rose.

'Come out and find some fruit for your mother,' he said. 'How's her appetite, my boy? Does she care at all for ducklings, when they're tender? Her strength must be kept up.'

'It came too late, boy,' he murmured dreamily, leading the child away. 'Too late.'

'Little Lad!' said a voice which Robin recognised next day as he pushed at the iron portal. Behind him stood the lady! with the same blue, wild eyes, full of smiles.

'That's right, Little Lad! Ghosts are lonely. I see you often going in and out. But tell me,' and she looked down upon the child, her smiles replaced by a strange intensity, 'is he really a ghost? Was I mistaken? I dream sometimes. Is he a ghost after all?'

Before Robin could answer she bent lower.

'Will you take him a message,' she asked, 'from me?'

The boy, magnetised, bowed his head.

'From Ruth,' said she: "'*Did you love Isabel?*" That's all. Four words. From Ruth, tell him. There they come!' She looked over her shoulder. Two figures—one tall, one short—were approaching in swift pursuit.

'When we meet again, give me his answer. I'll manage it. I'll be on the watch. "*Did you love Isabel?*" Only that.'

'Don't distress yourselves, pray don't,' she cried in quite a different tone to her companions. 'I am perfectly safe. This young gentleman is quite able to protect me.'

She waved her hand with stately grace towards Robin, who, half frightened, made haste to disappear.

The old gentleman was in the cedar avenue.

'I've got a message for you. From Ruth,' said the boy.

The old gentleman stood still. The colour vanished from his cheeks, his chin, almost from his lips. His black eyes gazed like two dark-globed lamps upon Robin.

'It was the Lady. I saw her in the road again. "From Ruth," she said. "*Did you love Isabel?*" That was all.—I am to give her your answer.'

'I will give it myself.'

He strode forward.

'Stop! Please, stop,' cried the child. 'They took her away. Those people—the tall one and the short one. Her sisters, are they?'

It seemed to Robin that the old gentleman shivered. The summer-house was close by. He turned in at the open door and sat down among the shadows.

'I shall see her again,' said Robin. '*Did you love Isabel?*' he mechanically repeated. 'What shall I tell her?'

'Tell her No!' shouted the old gentleman, with sudden emphasis. 'Tell her I was mad and a fool. Tell her that I have waited here to explain to her for five-and-thirty years—five-and-thirty years.'

He stopped suddenly, folding his arms.

'Yes? I'll remember,' said Robin, expecting more.

'Never mind,' the old gentleman murmured, now only just audible. 'She couldn't—understand. But—*Did I love Isabel?* Tell her No, boy,' the emphasis returning; 'tell her No, No, No!'

VI.

ROBIN's mother was still crying when the child went home. For a while his little heart felt ready to break. But when, discovering this, she made an effort, dried her tears, and proposed in her weak voice a game of 'Reversi,' he was quickly happy once more.

His anxieties, however, revived when the evening post brought a letter in a blue envelope—always blue envelopes!—for his father, just returned from the town. Mr. Savile was strong and muscular, and hitherto—by such self-control as Robin could not conceive—he had seemed outwardly cheerful. But now, having read this letter, he sank into a chair, rested his head upon his hand, and groaned aloud.

'Are you getting ill too, father?' asked poor Robin timidly.

Mr. Savile looked up, strangely haggard.

'I did not see you, Robin. Run away, my boy. Run out and play in the garden.'

'If you please, sir, the mistress heard the postman,' said Clara at the door.

'I will come to her in a moment,' said Mr. Savile.

As the girl retired, he fell upon his knees.

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' he moaned, half unconsciously, echoing the sacred words.

Robin stole away, bewildered and alarmed.

The 'garden' was only a grassplat, with a path and a border; but it was better, he thought, than the house. The long summer day was closing; a red sunset brightened the sky beyond the meadows. Elsewhere, the light was softening; already a faint star twinkled above the gables of the Gentleman Opposite. Mr. Cudds had planted the border with white stocks. Their fragrance seemed to blend with the calm. The child stooped to inhale it.

'Little Lad! Little Lad!' said a voice just above a whisper.

The lady stood beside the wicket-gate. Her cheeks burned like two deeply-hued carnations. She stretched out her hand and beckoned.

'Quick! I've not a moment. They'll miss me. I told you I'd manage it. What did he say, Little Lad? What did he say?'

'Little Lad was my great-uncle,' said Robin, musingly. 'I've found out that.' For the moment he had forgotten his message.

'Did you ask him? Did you ask him if he loved Isabel?'

pursued the lady in wild agitation. With one hand she drew Robin nearer; the other she pressed to her side.

'Yes, I asked him. And he said, "No, No, No." He said he had been mad and a fool. He said, "Tell her No, No, No,"' repeated Robin, the scene reviving.

'Ah!' said the lady.

She pressed her hand more tightly to her side.

'That was my soul,' she said. 'It fluttered, and spread its wings. Yes, I felt them. I must see him. I must see him!' she cried.

She looked hurriedly behind her. The many windows of the white house burned like fires in the sunset. But the road lay empty and still.

'They've not found out yet. But they will soon. Little Lad, there's not a moment.'

She opened the small gate and pulled him through.

'Take me to him now, at once,' she said. 'You took me that day—you led me with your hot little hand; you said he wanted me; you led me down to the river, where the boats were waiting under the weeping ash. We left you behind on the bank; we rowed away, away, he and I, and I never saw your little bright face again. Why did you go in the large boat with the others? We looked round, and it was upset, and you were lost. But no—he jumped out to save you. Yes, I remember. Has he hidden you all this time? But come! come!'

They were skirting the silent old house; they had reached the lawn. At some distance the old gentleman was strolling among his standard rose trees.

The lady stopped short.

'Go to him, Little Lad,' she whispered. 'Say, "Here she is. I've brought her." That was what you said before, you know, under the weeping ash.'

Robin ran across the soft turf. His hero stood unconscious, his back towards them, inspecting a rose lately budded. The boy lightly touched the long hand.

'Here she is. I've brought her,' he repeated.

The soldierly figure turned.

'Hector!' cried the lady.

She looked young and light, like a girl. She came swiftly over the grass.

The old gentleman said not a word. But a soul of long ago, old no more, awakened, and leaped into his black eyes.

‘Hector, you never said good-bye. They told me you were gone. But I was watching. Why did you never come to say good-bye?’

A wild agony passed like a spasm across the strong withered face. The lips moved as if to speak. But they uttered no sound.

‘Ah, you’re sorry!’ said the lady. ‘Yes, I can see it.’ Her tone softened to an ineffable tenderness; her eyes shone and smiled.

‘I knew all the time that you would be sorry—afterwards. Yes, afterwards.’

She paused and held out her hands.

Quick steps resounded upon the gravel beyond the house.

‘Which way?’ cried a harsh voice.

‘Ah, they’ve missed me at last!’ she said; and her hands fell. The old gentleman strode forward.

‘Ruth!’ he cried. ‘Oh, I am not worthy! But—but——’

‘Never mind,’ she said, smiling again, as the hurried steps drew nearer. ‘I had a great deal to ask you, Hector.’

She stopped suddenly, looking up at the sky. The soft radiance seemed reflected in her eyes. She went on smiling:

‘But you shall tell me all about it *THERE*,’ she said, pointing straight above her; ‘There—There—There!’

Her voice was quite clear and calm, like that to which she pointed. But another instant, and a clamour of alarm, reproach, apology, had surrounded the little group. Robin’s old acquaintances—tall and short—were leading the lady away. Or, as before, it appeared as though she led them: giving to each an arm, walking speedily, and not once looking back.

VII.

‘HUSH!’ said Clara.

The maid-of-all-work leaned, beside Robin, from an upper window. A funeral was passing in the road.

‘Speak in a whisper, Master Robin—they’ll think you unfeeling. She was a mad lady from the white house up yonder. It’s a private madhouse. They have their milk from Mr. Cudds. There was no lack of money, anyhow. Just see how respectable! An open hearse, and, lor, what beautiful flowers! Poor lady! she’d been there nigh a lifetime. At first she was downright distracted—tried to kill herself ever so many times. Mr. Cudds’s sister was her keeper. She’d sit without speaking for days, and then jump up and dash her head against the wall. But of late

she's been as quiet as a lamb and quite harmless. She was harmless always, to everyone but herself, the milkman says.'

The minute-bell tolled.

'I hope that won't wake the mistress,' whispered Clara. 'There's the chief mourner by himself in that first carriage. Master Robin! it's the Gentleman Opposite.'

So it was. In deep mourning, a rigid figure, all alone, sat Robin's old friend, following the coffin.

'Perhaps she was his sister,' said Robin.

'It's well, any way, she had him. For look, there's only one carriage more; and them in it is just the doctor and Lawyer Giles and the two keepers—one's tall and one's short. Not a soul else. Poor thing! Well, she'd been as good as dead, ever such a while. And yet, the milkman says, she was a sweet lady, and a favourite with 'em all, patients and servants, up at the house there.'

In the evening Robin visited the old gentleman. Exactly a week had passed since that strange interview in the garden. The child had called every day, but had not again seen his old friend. But this evening he found him seated in his straightbacked chair facing the picture. The inkstand was closed; the quill pens stood dry in their holes; the *History of the 17th Lancers* lay unopened below its bronze weight. Only a small roll of paper, yellow from age, lay idle in the bony old hand.

'Well, my little man!' said he with a faint smile. 'I had thought of sending for you. Come and sit down by me.'

'Was it—the Lady?' asked Robin suddenly.

He looked up at the smiling picture. His eyes slowly filled; his lip quivered.

'You're sorry, then?' said his friend. 'But never mind. She had suffered very much while she was here. I am going to tell you about it. I will tell you for a warning to yourself when your own time comes, my little lad.—She's with the real Little Lad now.'

'How came she to know him?' inquired Robin, consoled in anticipation of a story.

'When that was painted'—the old gentleman pointed to the picture—'his family and hers were great friends. One summer she went on a long visit to the Saviles—your great-grandparents and their children—while her own parents were abroad. There happened to be a young tutor also staying in the house, coaching the elder boys for an examination. He sometimes taught Little Lad too, and Little Lad was devoted to her. They were often

brought together, she and he, through their dealings with Little Lad.'

'Did you know the young tutor? Was he nice?'

'I knew him—too well, my little chap. He seemed nice to Little Lad and to her; but he had great faults. He was hot-tempered and impatient, like a warhorse only half-broken. But in those summer days his faults did not appear. It was such a beautiful summer! and they grew to love each other very much, that young tutor and——' He pointed again, in silence.

'But the ending of that blessed time was a type of what came after. It ended in Little Lad's death. The young tutor got him out of the water, but the little life was quenched. Then the gay party broke up; the poor parents were half distracted, and—she—went home to her relations. She was rich, and the young tutor was poor. He followed her, and asked her father to let him marry her; but her father refused.'

'What happened then?' asked Robin, as the old man paused. The black eyes, no longer dim, were fixed, as if they saw past times, upon the picture.

'Just at first they did not much mind. The young tutor resolved to work hard and win her; and she told him that she would never forget him, but wait for him all her life if need were. But he said that she should only wait two years. They parted, and in two years he came back. He had prospered, and was in a fair way to prosper more. But her father was very proud, and still he said No. So the young tutor went away for another year.'

'I think he was not impatient at all,' said Robin.

'Ah! Wait a bit, my boy. At the end of the next year he came again, and still the father said No. So then the young tutor begged her to disobey her father and be married away from her home. But she would not. Because she was very good. She was like an angel. And though she loved him—better than her life, she said—she could not, even for him, do wrong. It would be wrong, she felt, to disobey her father and break her mother's heart.'

'Was the young tutor angry with her?'

'He waited one more year. That was four years from the time he came first. And then he got very angry. He managed to see her, and he told her that she did not care for him, and a great deal more, and refused to believe what she said. It was only pretence. She knows now, my boy, that it was only pretence. Then some work turned up for him near her home. She had to

meet him constantly ; and all the while she was so miserable—her father and mother pulling one way and he another—that she wondered why her heart did not break. She told him so, many a time, but he would not heed her.—And then there came another girl—a girl of another kind altogether—who took a fancy to the young tutor, and was always putting herself in his way. And he had yielded to his passions, my little man, till the devil entered into him ; and because Ruth, in her holiness and goodness, tormented him, he resolved to torment her. So he pretended now to love the other girl, and took care that Ruth should see it and hear of it, and—and—— But you are only a child. I am in my dotage to talk of such things to you.'

'Oh, do, do go on !' cried Robin.

'Then, almost without knowing it—he wouldn't stop to think calmly—he found himself engaged to the other one. Engaged to be married, my boy ; and the day after he would have given worlds to undo it. But there he was, and the news spread quickly, and Ruth was told ; and she had to meet them in society—him and—the other always near him. But he did not know, boy—to do him justice—he did not know what that sight was working in her. Then months went on, and the other girl began to wonder why he fixed no time for the marriage ; and at last she showed him this very plainly, and somehow—though he tried still to pretend—she found out that he had never cared for her. And just then someone better worth having turned up, and she ran away and married him instead, and left the young tutor free.'

'So then did he go back to poor Ruth ?'

'There his pride came in, my boy. Ah ! you see what a bad fellow he was, and how richly he deserved all—all—through the long years. Everyone was laughing—or he fancied so—at the other girl's trick, and saying that he had been jilted ; and men were wanted for the Crimea, so he went off, still without stopping to think, and enlisted. He fought like a mad tiger, hoping that he would be killed ; but he wasn't. He came back, and found himself rich. And now he was in his right mind again. He went down quickly to Ruth's home.'

Once more a strange spasm passed over the old face. The long hand grasped the chair's oaken arm.

'He meant to beg her to forgive him. He meant to fall at her feet and tell her the whole truth. But she was gone.'

'Clara said——' began Robin.

The old gentleman had not heard the interruption.

'Where she was gone, he followed. He resolved to wait, as she had waited. He hoped that a time would come when she would awake and be herself again, and that then—then—— He hoped it—at first he believed it. But no matter. He bought a house as near her as he could find one. He bought all he could buy of the land round it. He would suffer nothing, possible to avoid, between that house and—hers.—Thirty-five years! He waited thirty-five years.'

The old gentleman rose suddenly. The faded paper fluttered to the ground.

'Ah! Look you here, my boy. I mustn't go without showing you this. It came to me three days ago from a lawyer's office. She had a fortune in her own right; and on her twenty-first birthday—some two years after she met the young tutor—she made her simple will, leaving him all. Here is her signature :

"Ruth Ennerdale."

That is her hand. It has been accumulating. It comes to a great deal of money. You will hear more of it some day, my Little Lad. I have done with it what she would have desired.'

He folded the paper, enclosing it in his silver-clasped pocket-book. Then he took his hat and went out.

Robin followed like a little dog, through the glass door, round the house, into the road. The sun was setting, as on that evening a week ago; its glow transfigured the hedges. After some time they passed into a peaceful lane: whence presently a gate opened upon quiet walks, green swards, and graves beguiled by flowers.

The old gentleman entered, Robin still following. They turned from the main path to a still spot overshadowed by a weeping ash. Here was one grave alone, newly made, covered with fresh and fragrant wreaths.

The old gentleman stood still, looking down upon it.

'Ruth!' he said suddenly. 'Do you remember the story of Ruth, boy? . . . Ruth's words reversed; Ruth's words returned to her. Despitefully entreated, flung away, but now returned to her!'

He bared his white head, and repeated, still gazing upon the grave:

'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and there will I be buried.'

Then he was silent.

At length Robin pulled timidly at his coat.

'It's getting very late,' said the child. 'I think it's bedtime I see two stars.'

'Run home,' said the old gentleman dreamily. 'Your mother will miss you. Run home as fast as you can, my Little Lad.'

VIII.

EARLY next morning, when Robin went out of doors, he saw a small knot of people looking hither and thither, discoursing in anxious tones. A policeman, two or three women, and a majestic man-servant—whom Robin knew.

'What's the matter, Mr. Belton?' he inquired, stealing up in the rear.

'Here is the little gentleman I mentioned, policeman,' said Belton. 'I was just about to step across, young sir, to ask when you last saw my master.'

'He's in the habit of staying up in the library, policeman, till very late these summer nights,' said one of the women. 'He bars the glass door himself. That's why we never found it out till Mr. Belton took his shaving-water.'

'He went last night to the cemetery,' said Robin. 'I went too, and he sent me home.'

'We'll try the cemetery next, then,' said the policeman cheerfully.

The little party proceeded in silence along the road, and down the quiet lane. Robin followed as a matter of course.

The gates were not yet unlocked. The lodge-keeper apologised. He had overslept himself, and neglected his early round. He had seen no one.

But they went on, led by Robin, into the shadow of the weeping ash.

Stretched upon that newly-made grave—the wreaths which had covered it arranged, with soldierly precision, below—his arms clasped about its head, his face turned downward, as if to meet some other face, dearly loved, lay the Gentleman Opposite.

How soundly he was sleeping! thought Robin.

And in his sleep he smiled.

IX.

THE blinds were all drawn down in the long low house. The *History of the 17th Lancers* would never be finished.

But over the way, in the cottage built out of spite, there was joy—all the sweeter for its surprise. It was like a fairy tale; she could hardly believe it, Mrs. Savile said. That the very day before the awful bill became due—the bill renewed again and again, but now inevitable—which would have plunged them into

hopeless ruin, a lawyer should come and tell them that they were poor no longer, but rich—not merely ‘well off,’ but rich—beyond their wildest desires!

The Gentleman Opposite, said the lawyer, had made them heirs to a fortune long ago bequeathed to him. His own property was entailed; but the present legacy—the original testatrix having died without kith or kin, and being formerly upon intimate terms with the Savile family—was, the lawyer opined, eminently suitable. He begged, in any necessary business arrangements, to offer his services.

The lawyer having bowed himself out, the curate-vicar ran swiftly up the narrow stairs, and found his wife, whom the strange voice had startled, trembling, and praying for courage to encounter new sorrows.

But her prayer became praise! Together they thanked God. The one shadow tempering their happiness was that—on this side the grave—they could not thank the Gentleman Opposite.

Robin’s bereavement was greatly softened when he found that they were all going home in peace: all except Clara, who had promised to marry the milkman.

On the night before that happy journey, it seemed to the child that he stood once more in the old library, and near him stood a tall figure, which he knew and yet knew not. The face was young; the black eyes had never shone with such brilliance. They were looking towards the picture; and suddenly the smiling form therein moved and stepped forth to meet him, holding out her hands.

‘Now at last you can tell me all,’ she said. ‘Ah, it is over! We shall part no more.’

She pointed towards the garden. They went together through the glass door. A white bird flew before them; the flowering trees were in bloom; and there was music, as of voices in concert, far away.

And still the white bird flew on; and the two figures, clasped together, followed. The garden was lengthening and widening; the white bird’s wings were touched with a golden glow.

‘Is this Heaven?’ said Robin.

He had spoken aloud in his sleep. Therewith he awoke.

It was morning. The sun was already high, and the sky beyond his window was blue.

And across the passage he heard his mother’s voice—still weak, but with life renewed—singing, from gladness of heart, as a child sings, the Morning Hymn.

E. CHILTON.

The 'Donna' in 1892.

I. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'CHARLES LOWDER.'

IT is a great pleasure and encouragement to find that the yearly account in this Magazine of 'the Sisters' pudden-board,' as its poor customers call it, does not appear to weary our readers, but that rather fresh interest is aroused each year and new friends are found to help us. This is quite necessary if the work is to be kept up; for in the course of eight years, since it was begun, many subscribers have passed away, and we need fresh helpers to enable the truck called the 'Donna,' laden with hot food, to take its daily station for an hour under London Bridge and to sell excellent portions of soup, pudding, &c., for one halfpenny to the hundreds of poor and unemployed men who besiege the truck from twelve to one. For the information of new friends it may be as well to say that the cost price of each portion of food is one penny; half the cost is therefore provided by the subscriptions sent to the Editor of LONGMAN'S.

I have sometimes feared lest the 'ower true tales' of poor customers, both at the 'Donna' truck and at the 'Night Refuge,' which grew out of it, might pall on the readers of these papers, but at no time since the work began have such widespread expressions of sympathy been received from distant lands—India, New South Wales, South Australia, &c.—as during the past twelve months. From Calcutta a lady wrote that she had had several copies made in type-writing of the 'Donna' article in LONGMAN for January, 1892, for distribution, feeling sure that a large number of ladies in India would like to work for the 'Night Refuge' men; and she has already sent one parcel of woollies. 'In common with many other readers of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,' another lady writes from South Australia, 'I take a deep interest in the accounts of the "Donna" in that Magazine. Having lived

near London till my marriage, I have seen something of the sufferings of the London poor, and feel an intense pity for those needing warm clothing during the bitterly cold months.' After mentioning the woollies sent, and which have been received, she adds, 'I have tied a card on each article, and a threepenny-piece behind each card, so that each recipient may get some food from the "Donna" and be for the time warmed and fed.'

Another letter from South Australia has just arrived, announcing the despatch on October 17 of a box of woollies (value 2*l.* 10*s.*) for the 'Night Refuge.' 'We always read,' the kind donor writes, 'with the deepest interest all the articles in LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE on the subject. We have no such poverty in this colony as is relieved by the "Donna"; so that, although we probably do not in the least realise what it is, it strikes us with more horror than those who are more accustomed to it.'

'Just before your letter reached me,' another kind friend writes from New South Wales, 'I got my first instalment of LONGMAN, just in time to set people to work while their sympathies are hot.' She sends a large parcel of woollies, with subscriptions to the 'Donna' and 'Night Refuge.' She had written last May saying that Australians are proverbially generous, and that there was so little poverty around her she felt sure that many would be only too glad to help. Alas, she writes in September, 'the money I am sending is from myself. I have not asked anyone, for this has been a very bad financial year in all the Australian colonies: banks, building societies, &c., closing their doors.'

The strikes here have undoubtedly caused much misery. 'The carpenters' strike was the ruin of the bricklayers and plasterers,' said a sad-faced 'Donna' customer, by trade a plasterer. 'They couldn't go on with their share of the work alone, of course; that's how one class stopping trips another up. Then when the strike stopped the carpenters could begin again working under shelter, but we couldn't, for the winter was on us. But they got nothing by it, the men—and served them right. Striking for eight hours a day, as if a man hadn't a right to work ten if he liked! Why, what would become of us that only have the fine weather to work in, if we couldn't make up for lost time a bit when, may be, the rent's been running, and everything getting behindhand? But it isn't the men's fault, it's these agitators: they make a pretty income out of it, and ride about in cabs; they don't think of the ones that have to go without. The strikes are the ruin of the nation.'

Whatever the faults of the unemployed may be, there is no fear at present of their refusing even moderate wages. 'There's been no boats coming into the docks all the week,' one man said, 'so we're all very bad off; and when they do come in, why, the market's glutted. There's not enough for all us Londoners to do, but this scheme of General Booth's 'as brought a lot of country chaps up. They think as 'ow they're going to make their fortin out and out, and they do get taken on instead of us sometimes. The foreman stands at the gate, and he sees they look well and 'earty, and beckons 'em in. But doesn't he find out his mistake sometimes when a countryman tries to carry off a case of oranges! Why, he's never 'ardly seen such a thing, much less tried to lift it on 'is shoulders and carry it off.'

Here is a scene, only one out of many described by a Sister, from her own experience. A comfortless hovel in the East End, where a pale emaciated woman lay on the miserable bed which, with one broken-backed chair and an old box, formed its only furniture. A fireless grate, an empty cupboard, and half-clad shivering children crying for bread. The daylight was fading, and the children, awed by the gathering darkness, ceased their crying to climb upon the bed. Footsteps were heard approaching: 'Father' was coming. The sick woman's eyes lighted up with painful expectancy as the door opened. 'Got any work yet, Robert?' she asked anxiously.

There was no reply; but the man came up to the bedside, took one of her thin hands in his, turned away, and fairly sobbed.

The great majority of the 'Donna's' customers belong only too obviously to this out-of-work class, though here and there among the crowd of eager diners may be seen a burly drayman with a sack round his shoulders, who, being in work, pays a penny for each portion of food ordered.

'I tries every day at the Docks,' says one in a hopeless way, 'but it ain't no use; the union men gets it all now.' Another poor fellow, after ravenously devouring a ha'porth of plum-duff, edged up to a visitor, and begged to be given a pint of soup at his expense.

'Ah, sir!' he said, in reply to a hint that he had already had food; 'it's all werry well for them as has plenty to say as 'arf a loaf's better than no bread. But when a chap's downright 'ungry, them old saws is like old crusts—they doesn't satisfy.'

After him came one almost at the last, most miserable amongst his fellows. And yet he was the only one amongst them whose

individuality seemed not to have been utterly crushed out by poverty. His face bore a striking resemblance to that of a well-known actor, and, what is very unusual, it was clean shaven. The almost jaunty air, too, with which he approached the counter and gave his order for 'a ha'porth of soup and a ha'porth of plain,' was something out of the common. One would think he meant to spend twenty pounds there and then. And then to see him eat! He attacked the pudding first, eyeing it the while in a famished, jealous way, as if grudging himself every bite he took. The soup quickly disappeared, without the aid of a spoon or addition of salt; he could not have been more than a minute over both. Never before did we see a man so ravenously hungry: it made the heart ache to watch him.

Two new faces appeared lately at the 'Donna'; the men were evidently great friends, one of them watching the other in admiring silence when he asked for soup and began to tell about his adventures. 'We came over here to seek our fortunes,' he said, 'but we have come to the wrong place, seemingly.' The whole fortune they had realised was sixpence, which had been given them. They laid it out on matches, and had brought the profits of their sales for a dinner at the 'Donna.' The one who acted as spokesman seemed wonderfully happy through it all, and his air of protection for his friend was very touching.

'Have you got anything for a halfpenny?' another asked. 'Me and my mate are on the road, and that is all I've got.' He decided to have some 'plum,' and divided his 'ha'porth' into two equal portions, which he gratefully carried away to share with his mate.

'A pennyworth of plain, please. Oh, but this is the best stuff for me!' a pleasant-looking man exclaimed, turning to a small pile of broken pieces, of which he could get a little more for his penny. 'That's fine for the bairns.'

A tall and formidable-looking stranger complained one day to an old 'Donna' customer that his basin of soup was small, probably expecting sympathy; but our old friend rose up in arms at once and exclaimed indignantly, 'There's nowhere in London that you can get a bigger ha'porth than you get here.—Eh, what's that?' in answer to some muttered remark from the adversary. 'I've 'ad as good an education as you have; it's not the clothes as makes the man.' We felt inclined to say Bravo! and have had a great admiration for the little man ever since.

A frequent customer came up one morning, and in a very

hurried manner passed an orange over the 'pudding-board,' saying, 'Here's an orange for you, Sister,' and was off almost before he could be thanked.

'Please, Sister, give me the awkward part of that 'ere puddin' you're cuttin'.' Sister, rather puzzled, wondered if she was expected to know what the customer meant. 'Don't yer see?' he exclaimed, not too hardened by suffering to enjoy a joke. 'Do yer need showin'? Why, the awkward part comes out of the middle, and is seven inches long, not to speak of its other dimensions, and yer gives it, or leaseways yer ought to give it, to the hungriest-lookin' on us.'

One poor little boy, eagerly waiting till the men had been served, got so close to the soup-can that a basin was half-emptied down his jacket, which was all open showing his bare chest. For one moment he wrestled with the pain of the hot soup, then turned sharply to reply to the question, 'Was he much hurt?' 'Not very much, but I do wish it had bin my mouth open instead of my jacket; it ain't done me much good applied on the outside.'

So, day by day, the long rolls of mottled and white pudding disappear, the pea-soup sinks lower and lower in the last huge tin, the crowd dwindles away to a few utterly penniless ones, who gratefully receive and greedily devour the scraps, and our 'Donna's' dinner is at an end. Last year a kind friend sent twenty-four dozen tablets of soup-powders to the 'Donna'—a great addition to the substance and flavour of the soup.

One poor man was on his way back to wife and children, after an expedition in search of work which, happily, has been successful.

'But,' he said wearily, 'I'm eight miles from home, and, though I've earned two shillings, I grudge spending it on 'busses, and I'm too played out to walk. Besides, I can get work again to-morrow in the same place. I told my wife maybe I shouldn't be back.'

'Are you strong enough to work?' the Sister asked.

'Why, you've got to be strong enough for what you've got to do,' was the reply. 'The doctor said I wasn't to stir out of doors; but that's neither here nor there, when you see your children starving. Eighteen weeks I have been out of regular work, and you can think what that means. My lungs are pretty bad, but I guess if I earned more I'd soon come round; it's the thought of rent running and no firing that pulls a fellow down. My wife's done all she can, and she's a jewel. I'd like to tell you what she

did this morning before I started at five o'clock. She took the only warm knitted thing she's got—what she always wears herself—and wrapped it round under my coat to protect my chest, as if her own cough wasn't pretty near as bad as mine. I wouldn't have taken it, only when she cried and begged me to, what could I do ?

Another poor unemployed was asked if he had a wife. His reply was somewhat startling : 'Oh, no ! *Thank God*, she's dead.' It was no lack of love for her that made the poor fellow speak thus. 'She was always delicate,' he added, 'and I couldn't 'ave beared for 'er to go through all I've 'ad to this last year ; she's better off now ; she'll never be 'ungry nor cold any more where she is.'

As we have said before, we must go to the 'Friend-in-Need' (the Night Refuge) to hear the stories of many to whom it is impossible to talk during the busy hour at the 'Donna.' Since last year a very important offshoot from the Refuge has been begun—the 'Labour Home' in Burwood Mews, Edgware Road—where employment is given to men who come to the Night Refuge, and cannot find it elsewhere. It was opened at the beginning of 1892 with about twenty men, carefully selected from amongst those who had been *tested* and found deserving at the Refuge. They are employed in carpentering, tailoring, boot-making, &c., their wages being seventeen shillings a week. This Labour Home is indeed a double charity scheme, for the men are largely employed in building, completing, and repairing the six orphanages (containing 700 children) under the Sisters' care—at Kilburn, Brondesbury, Broadstairs, Eastcombe, Oxford, and Swansea ; so that on the one side there is the unemployed working-man, with perhaps a wife and family, living a wasted life ; on the other, the unfinished Home and Schools, needing the labour of the many men whose employment would prove a double blessing.

'This is something like comfort, lady !' said one of the guests at the Refuge, as he took the basin of pea-soup into his bony hands. 'Different from last night, this is.'

'Where were you last night ?' asked the visitor.

'On a bench in the Park, lady. It's the first time I ever passed a night there, and I wish it may be the last. Up till last night I've generally managed to make two or three coppers. I held a horse for a gentleman, and he gave me sixpence. I was a gentleman's servant, lady, and had a good berth, but he died—it was the influenza. He was a kind master, and I might have

saved a bit then; but I never thought things would turn out like this, and it all slipped through my fingers. Last night I was dead beat—I must lie down somewhere, and I'd not a copper. It was precious cold though!'

'Wasn't it raining?'

'Not in the night, lady. It had been. The bench was all wet, but I wiped it as best I could. It's a wonder folks ever wake again, lying down there. It's something to come in here and see anyone look a bit friendly at you, instead of saying they can't do anything for you, before they know what you're going to ask.'

On the opposite bench was an elderly man, his eyes very bright, his face pale and drawn, looking like what he was—a man in the last stage of consumption.

He had a pretty good place as porter, the Sisters told their visitor, but increasing weakness led to his dismissal; so he took to costering, perhaps the quickest and most certain road to death for a consumptive subject.

The next man to whom the visitor spoke had a still sadder story to tell. Quite a young man, with a sullen, bitter, and suspicious face.

'I was tried for stealing, and they found me guilty; but I hadn't anything on me, and I told them it had been took from me, so they only gave me three weeks.'

'But I don't understand. *What* was taken from you?'

'The money, lady,' he replied, rather defiantly. 'I was errand-boy to a big firm in S— Street, and one day they sent me with money—ten shillings it was—and two fellows set on me and knocked me over and ran off with it.'

Somehow he hurried over the last sentence without raising his eyes. 'How terrible!' the visitor said. 'And would no one believe you?'

'No,' the lad muttered, his head sinking lower. Then, suddenly raising it, he spoke with fierce determination:

'That was all gammon, lady. I *did* take it! I made it up about them coves knocking me down. I'd got into a scrape and——'

His voice broke suddenly.

'And you thought you would get out of it *that* way, poor fellow! Well, you must begin over again.'

'It's no good, ma'am. Nobody will take me now. And my mother never came to the trial; I did think she'd have stood by

me that much. If she'd looked arter me like some chaps is looked arter, I'd never have been copped.'

'But it wasn't all her fault, was it?' said his new friend, and talked a little longer, till things seemed to grow rather more clear, and there was a gleam of hope on the sullen face.

At first the Refuge was entirely free, but last year it was found better to charge the nominal sum of threepence for a supper of soup and bread, and a breakfast of cocoa and bread, the beds remaining free. A number of cases are, however, admitted free; the Refuge would belie its name did its doors close against any really destitute wayfarer. To a man coming in after a day's tramping, wet, half-frozen, hungry, the place seems like a Paradise; although the beds only consist of canvas hammocks, with leather pillows and coverlets. But the cleanliness, the lavatory with soap and towels, and the cheerful, open, roaring stoves in every dormitory, bring comfort to the hearts of poor wayfarers. Sometimes a crowd assembles outside at two in the afternoon, to wait for four hours until the doors open. Men from all classes of society find their way there. Amongst them last year was H. J., a discharged non-commissioned officer of the Horse Artillery, who had returned from India after seven years' service, in bad health, with an excellent character from his commanding officer for smartness, sobriety, and trustworthiness. 'Yes,' he said, 'it is painful to have to come to this; but it would be just death to me to be out in the streets at night in my present health, and coming from such a hot climate.'

S. S. came in sore distress, having had a double misfortune. Some years ago he broke his leg, now he had managed to break his *wooden* leg, and once more found himself a helpless cripple. 'Wooden legs are so dear,' he said, in melancholy tones. 'I might almost as well hope to get a new one of flesh and blood as to get money enough to replace this. I see nothing before me but the workhouse.'

'It's my boots as is the worst trouble, ma'am,' another poor fellow said, who was vainly trying to mend them with a needle, which he had taken out of his pocket carefully wrapped in a piece of newspaper. 'You see what they're come to; and my feet seem almost as near wore out as the boots, what with tramping all day, and sometimes all night too. We'd a rough life at sea, but I'd rather be in the Bay of Biscay, or the North Sea, than in London streets.'

'You are a sailor, then?'

'Yes, lady. You look at my bit of parchment.'

A spark of pleasure and pride lit up his face as he pulled out a little packet from his pocket, wrapped carefully in newspaper as the needle had been. He spread it carefully out on his knee, and asked us to read it.

'Folks in the street look at me as if they made sure I was a bad lot; but you'll notice, lady, that there's V.G. against everything on my bit of parchment; and I served a long time too.'

'How is it that you are in trouble?'

'It's illness in my case, lady, as with a good many more. I had a bad fall from the mast and have been months in the 'orspital. I'm well enough now for an easy job, but they won't have a chap with a weak back on board; it stands to reason they won't.'

Some of the other men in the Refuge that evening allowed that their failure in life was through some fault of their own, but by far the greater number were in trouble merely from slackness of trade. The Sisters require a reference in cases where employment is found for the men.

At the Labour Home in Burwood Mews all is different. One may see, indeed, in their faces how hard the struggle has been; yet, as they go about their work, they have an air of quiet determination, as if they knew that a chance had been given them, and were resolved to make the most of it. They are lost waifs no longer, but surrounded by human interest and sympathy, and, after a few weeks of shelter, food, work, and rest, a man is another being. In one room there is a pile of old furniture, chairs minus legs, decrepit sofas, lame old tables, &c., which we should hardly have imagined could be mended. But the Sister-in-charge showed us another collection of furniture quite new, we should have imagined, but for her assurance: 'All that was just as bad a week or two ago; have they not made a good thing of it? And those boots on the shelf—don't you think they are fairly well done?'

In the 'Chip Department' the hugest bundles of sticks ever offered for a halfpenny were being added rapidly to a great stack in the corner of the workshop. The price per hundred bundles is three-and-sixpence, and orders for firewood are gladly received by the Sister-in-charge, Burwood Mews, Edgware Road, W. At this Home immense printing works have also been set up during the last year.

There is room for 150 men at the Night Refuge. 9,110 were received there last season—between November 1891 and May

1892, when it closed for the summer. It is certainly doing good work amongst, apparently, the most hopeless sort of men—men whom we cannot bear to think of on bitter wintry nights—wandering homeless, while we ourselves are enjoying every comfort. Any friends desirous of seeing for themselves the work going on there are cordially invited to do so. Tenter Street is but a short distance from Aldgate Station. The Refuge opens at 6.30 P.M.

At the Workroom in Berners Street, E., for the poor wives of the unemployed, widows, &c., numerous tokens of interest have been received this year from the readers of LONGMAN'S—one, a most welcome gift of six large bales of serge, each containing 56 yards. It provided nice soft work for old and crippled fingers; useful petticoats were made by the dozen, and frocks for girls going out to service. Another large parcel produced 176 yards of material from a 'Reader of LONGMAN'S.'

Perhaps the kindest thought of all was that of a lady who sent 20*l.* to be spent in employing women in knitting and making shirts to be given to the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen. The Sister-in-charge went to the office of the Mission to find out the articles most needed; the whole order is not yet completed, but I have seen specimens of different articles, huge sea-boot stockings of the very thickest wool, steering gloves of the same, waterproof gloves, mufflers, flannel shirts, &c., and can testify to their excellent workmanship. A very great double work of charity has thus been accomplished.

Another kindness to the Workroom has been a gift of four tea-parties to the forty women employed; two were given on the birthdays of children whose mothers, years ago, used to read to the poor women whilst at work. 'Now that do come acceptable,' they said, when they found that a threepenny-bit for each woman was added to the tea. It is a lovely sight to see how their faces light up as, unexpectedly, table-cloths are produced and a nice tea quickly laid. Sixpence a head provides an excellent tea—bread, butter, and cake or, in summer, fruit. A ninepenny tea provides a fresh egg or sausage roll. Each woman has her full allowance put on her plate, so that she may take home what she does not care to eat. Nice pieces of paper are always in readiness, in which apples, cakes, or roll is wrapped, to go 'to my old man,' or 'to the little children—it will come sweet to them, you see, coming unexpected-like.' Many are the grateful thanks and blessings showered on the kind givers of these repasts.

Old Mrs. Bullock was one of those most helped by the knitting for the fishermen, coming, as it did, when work was scarce in the summer. She had always kept her little furniture together; but whilst she was in hospital it was seized and sold for rent. When she came out, her only regular means of living was by keeping up, on Saturdays, the fires of poor Jews, for which she was paid a penny-halfpenny per fire. They were very kind to her, and clubbed together to contribute furniture to set her up again in a little room. The knitting of mufflers for the fishermen has been of the greatest help to her through the summer; she could not do the coarser work. It is at first very difficult to teach the poor rheumatic fingers of many of the women who are very old to work neatly; but they are most anxious to get on, and take great pains. They begin with list or patchwork child's stays, which uses up all the cuttings, &c., and requires much patience; but when prepared, the old fingers stitch and bind them, and, fortunately, they are very popular articles at the Sisters' depôts for selling clothes to the poor.

The working-hours are from two to five on three days a week, and close with a few prayers. Mrs. M., one of those employed, lives in a cellar-kitchen near the Docks. She just managed to live, while the Workroom was closed in summer, through the provision made by the Sisters of keeping back a penny from the wages on each working-day against the time of enforced idleness. She had eked out a living by 'welting stockings,' a wonderful process by means of which worn stockings are renewed in the feet.

'I get three-farthings a pair!' she said proudly; 'and I'm only one week behind with the rent, and when the Workroom opens I shall get that made up, I'm hoping. Two shillings a week is a good deal for this cellar, don't you think, ma'am? But there, my last room was three shillings.' She had a kindly neighbour who gave her the 'tea-leaves she had done with,' on which Mrs. M. poured boiling water; and upon this, with bread, she had lived for the five weeks when out of work. She was, however, in great distress for some months, being turned out of her two-shilling cellar, and nowhere else could she find room or cellar for one and sixpence a week, which was all she dared to give. One neighbour took her in for a few weeks, and then another, but it sorely distressed her not to have a bit of home of her own. Now sunnier days have begun for her, as she has a small pension of one and sixpence a week. She has asked to be prepared for Confirmation,

taking the greatest pains to understand the teaching given. 'What, Sister, you never mean that great grand church!' she exclaimed, when told that she was to be presented for Confirmation at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mrs. C. and the old woman who lives below are of very different proportions: one being exceedingly stout, and the other, to use her own expression, 'nothing more than a fish-bone.' The latter is very envious of her neighbour's vast proportions, and usually contrives to turn conversation to the subject: 'I can't think what's come to me; there's Mrs. C. *wadding* about, and I am nothing more than a fish-bone!'

Three of the old workwomen died very suddenly during the past year, having worked on uncomplainingly to the very last. It is touching to see the sympathy among the Workroom party—always ready to give a penny out of their small earnings to aid one of their number who may happen to be ill. Several times this year they have proposed to make a collection, saying how pleased they were to give; and at the death of two of these old women, they collected quite a nice little sum to help towards 'burying the poor dear respectable.'

'Do you think you'll be able to admit more to the Workroom later on, ma'am?' one of our poor workwomen asked the Sister-in-charge.

'I fear not,' was the answer; 'funds are so low; and we must not run in debt.'

'No, of course not,' agreed Mrs. C.; 'only Mrs. F. was in last night. She's been good to me—offering to help me with my scrubbing, and bringing me in tea and whatever she had when I was too ill to get up, a month ago. She was at the Workroom last winter, and now there's no room for her, and she was depending on it, like. Her man's out of work at the Docks, and no chance of getting it, she says.'

Hearing that poor Mrs. F.'s baby was also ill, a lady went to see her, whose knock was answered by a faint 'Come in.' She found Mrs. F. looking utterly exhausted after her night with baby, who had just fallen asleep in her arms.

'What is the matter with him?' the lady asked, as she looked at the tiny, wizened face, with its pitiful expression.

'Bronchitis,' was the answer. 'The doctor says I'll lose him if I can't get nourishing food. He can't touch the bread-sop any longer.'

'Have you no milk?'

'No, ma'am,' was the quiet, dreamy answer. 'We've nothing left in the house, and nothing to part with either. Have we, baby?'

The question, in fond, soothing tones, was only a kind of lullaby.

'Have you no bread even?'

'Not now,' said Mrs. F.'s candid voice, and her face was as candid. Besides, its ghastly pallor was sufficient witness to the truth of her words. 'There was a crust I'd saved, but we finished it at breakfast. The children did—my husband wouldn't touch it, and I couldn't. He went out to look for work.'

'Why didn't you come and tell the Sisters how bad things were?'

'Oh, I didn't feel to have the heart, ma'am! They do all they can; and now I'm losing baby I seem so hopeless, as if nothing would do any good. Poor little fellow! But he's going where he'll be better off, I hope. He's often been stinted here. Then not being taken on at the Workroom—I know it couldn't be helped—but it seemed the last straw.'

She spoke softly all the time lest she should wake the baby. But the agony in her voice was no less real because repressed.

'You mustn't lose heart yet, Mrs. F. Can you send up for some beef-tea for baby?'

A faint gleam of hope came into her white face. 'Oh, yes,' she said gratefully. 'That'll keep life in him.'

With a dinner for one of our poorest workwomen we brought a few flowers sent from a harvest thanksgiving. Could those whose garden is a delight to themselves only see what joy a few flowers bring to the poor in London, we should have many more to distribute among them. The tears came to Mrs. Rea's eyes as she exclaimed, 'Ah, they remind me so of my dear boy. He loved them, and all the time he was so ill his great delight was to look at the flowers I had such a struggle to buy. Sometimes he would fall asleep grieving that he had none, and his look of delight more than repaid me for giving up my food to buy them.'

Our readers may be glad to hear that the 'Donna Knitting Society' increases and flourishes. Last winter, from November 1891 to May 1892, we received from 205 members 384 mufflers, 56 pairs of socks, 10 shirts, 128 other 'woollies' and 4*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* in money. Members of the D. K. S. are most earnestly asked—(1) to enclose a list of articles sent, with name and address of sender, *in the parcel*, of woollies. Letters come days before parcels; and,

with the great number sent, it is almost impossible to find out to which parcel a letter refers; (2) to fasten pairs of socks together. I cannot say the trouble that would be avoided if these two requests were kindly attended to. It may be as well to give again the ONE RULE of the Society: *To send at least one woollen PAIR OF SOCKS, comforter, or vest, in knitting, crochet, or material, at any time before Christmas each year, to MISS TRENCH, Secretary, D.K.S., Pulham St. Mary, Norfolk.* From the same address may be obtained *The Donna*, a reprint gathered from several articles in this Magazine, by the Editor's kind permission, and giving a full account of the 'Donna' and its offshoots from the beginning. No greater help can be given to the work than by ordering and distributing this little pamphlet. Price twopence, post free.

When a large number of woollies are collected, they are sent to the Night Refuge and given on one evening to all the men present. Socks are valued by them more than anything. Last year there were several distributions, two of them being on Christmas Day and Easter Eve.

Good Friday and Christmas Day are free days to all guests at the Night Refuge. On last Good Friday there was a magic-lantern service for the men, with pictures of the Passion and Crucifixion; and on Christmas Day a dinner of meat-pies and potatoes, plum-puddings, apples, and oranges—the first 'good square meal' some of them had had for months. In the afternoon the men were free to go or stay for a short service. Only about twenty went out, and they returned in about two hours, perfectly sober, and 'thankful to have somewhere to come back to on Christmas Day.' At night the caretaker remarked on the perfect harmony and order that had prevailed all day, and the answer was—

'Well, when folks are kind to us, we like to deal fairly by them; and this has been more like a Christmas than some of us have known for many a long year!'

'Only,' said one, 'if a fellow ever had a home of his own, it brings it all back again, Sister. But it cheers one up to come in here and feel as if there was a place in the world where folks weren't in such a desperate hurry to move us on. And it's been a long lane, so maybe the turning 'll come some day!'

II. STATEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

THE annexed table of the numbers of portions served during the past year and the preceding five years is eminently satisfactory. The number has sunk from 154,418 in 1887-8 to 85,316. It is impossible to say to what cause this is due. It may be in part due to the fact that the demand for casual labour at the Docks has been diminished owing to the new regulations in force. It may be partly due to the effect of the Night Refuge by means of which the Sisters are occasionally able to lift men permanently out of the most hopeless class. It may be partly due to the operations of General Booth. If this is a large factor we must hope that General Booth's work may be permanently successful, or we may be in danger of seeing our numbers again largely increased. The diminution is the more remarkable as trade is undoubtedly bad, though the figures tend to show that the distress is not so great as has been alleged.

TABLE OF NUMBER OF MEN SERVED AT THE 'DONNA' TRUCK.

Month.	1886-7.	1887-8.	1888-9.	1889-90.	1890-91.	1891-2.
November	12,415	13,899	14,502	10,920	9,011	8,932
December	12,842	9,799	12,123	8,634	8,702	8,020
January	15,217	13,930	16,414	12,446	9,282	10,226
February	13,337	12,442	12,549	9,524	8,651	7,543
March	14,761	11,123	11,640	9,046	8,222	10,029
April	15,466	11,432	10,481	9,262	8,448	6,042
May	10,110	12,661	11,563	5,714	9,010	5,598
June	8,089	8,973	6,241	5,892	7,244	6,717
July	6,618	13,171	6,516	5,076	7,334	4,037
August	7,429	13,764	9,261	5,528	7,914	4,774
September	8,523	12,949	8,208	5,922	10,076	5,990
October	18,462	20,275	10,265	9,990	11,108	7,408
	143,269	154,418	129,763	97,954	105,002	85,316

The appended statement of account shows that subscriptions have been well maintained, and that the balance in hand has risen from 15*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* to 69*l.* 0*s.* 0½*d.*

£ s. d.

Expenditure.

DONNA'S FOOD-TRUCK ACCOUNT, 1891-92.

1891

Nov

Cost of food

£ s. d.

15 19 0

Receipts.

1891

Balance in hand

THE 'DONNA' IN 1892.

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'DONNA' FOOD-TRIAL ACCOUNT, 1891-92.

1891	Receipts.	£	s.	d.	1891	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand	Nov.	Cost of food	.	.	.
" November	.	15	19	0 $\frac{1}{2}$		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 2 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	.	.	.
" December	.	20	7	2		Cost of food	.	.	.
1892	.	17	14	8	Dec.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 2 <i>s.</i>	8	2	4
" January	.	22	6	7		Cost of food	.	.	.
" February	.	18	8	9 $\frac{1}{2}$		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 2 <i>s.</i>	33	8	4
" March	.	21	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1892	Cost of food	.	.	.
" April	.	13	11	9	Jan.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> ; free dinners, 2 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	8	2	0
" May	.	11	13	3		Cost of food	42	12	2
" June	.	13	19	10 $\frac{1}{2}$		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> ; free dinners, 2 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	.	.	.
" July	.	8	8	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	Feb.	Cost of food	10	2	4
" August	.	9	18	11		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 1 <i>s.</i> 11 <i>d.</i>	31	8	7
" September	.	12	19	7		Cost of food	.	.	.
" October	.	15	8	8	March	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> ; free dinners, 3 <i>s.</i> ; new tins, 1 <i>s.</i> 10 <i>d.</i> ; repairing tins, 8 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i>	8	1	11
Subscriptions	.	332	11	3		Cost of food	41	15	9
	April	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 1 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> ; repairing tins, 2 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	10	13	7
		Cost of food	25	3	6
	May	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 4 <i>d.</i>	8	4	1
		Cost of food	23	6	6
	June	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 4 <i>d.</i>	8	0	4
		Cost of food	27	19	9
	July	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> ; free dinners, 3 <i>d.</i> ; repairing tins, 1 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i>	10	2	0
		Cost of food	16	16	5
	Aug.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 4 <i>d.</i>	8	0	4
		Cost of food	19	17	10
	Sept.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; spoons, 1 <i>s.</i> 2 <i>d.</i>	8	1	2
		Cost of food	24	19	2
	Oct.	Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> 15 <i>s.</i> ; cooking expenses, 6 <i>l.</i> 5 <i>s.</i> ; free dinners, 9 <i>d.</i> ; repairing tins, 6 <i>s.</i> 10 <i>d.</i>	10	7	7
		Cost of food	30	17	4
		Wages, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cooking expenses, 5 <i>l.</i> ; free dinners, 3 <i>d.</i> ; New tins, 15 <i>s.</i>	8	15	3
		Share of cleaning and repairs to boiler	3	5	6
		Balance in hand	69	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
			£534	8	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Received for the Night Refuge . £ 79 13 9
 " " Work Room . 33 6 5

Twenty-five Years of Village Life.

IN an old and scarce edition of Quarles' *Emblems*, occasionally to be met with on second-hand bookstalls, may be found a quaint illustration, representative of the text, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.' The part of the picture which concerns us is that of the terrestrial globe, on which is marked four names only. These are London, Hilgay, Roxwell, and Finchfield; the last two in the county of Essex. Why Roxwell and Hilgay should have been selected for mention we do not know; but in London the edition was published, and at Finchfield, if tradition is to be trusted, part at least of the volume was written. The old house is still standing where Quarles used to stay, and the spot in the old-fashioned garden, beneath the shadow of an ancient brick wall, covered perhaps then, as now, with yellow stonecrop, is pointed out where the *Emblems* are said to have been written. The tradition is likely enough. Quarles was born in Essex, and evidently loved his native county: the discovery of the above-mentioned edition with the curious print lends corroboration to the local tradition; while the spot pointed out as Quarles' writing-place is just such an one as a poet would have loved.

Not far from the house where Quarles was wont to stay there stands, in a quiet and picturesque position, an ancient Elizabethan mansion, which at the beginning of the seventeenth century was owned by one William Kempe, whose ancestors had held possession of the estate since the time of the Conquest. The poet and the squire must have often met, though it is more than doubtful if they had ever spoken; for a strange story is told of the squire, the main facts of which are beyond question true. It is said that, in consequence of some domestic quarrel, in which he afterwards felt himself to have been wrong, he vowed never to speak for the space of seven years. That vow he kept, in spite of the

warning of a local wizard, known as 'The Black Raven,' that each year would be marked by some calamity—a prediction which tradition asserts to have been fulfilled. Overtaken one night by a terrific thunderstorm some miles from home, he took refuge with his servant in a disused and dilapidated building. There he overheard voices planning the robbery of his house that very night. Obedient to his vow of silence, he wrote what he had heard upon a scrap of paper, and handing it to his groom, made signs for him to hasten home with all possible speed. The man galloped off across country, but the swollen condition of the river barred his way. In forcing his horse through the rushing torrent the writing on the paper became so obliterated as to be wholly illegible. So the robbers were able to carry out their plans unmolested, and not only secured many valuables, but even murdered a child who was staying at the Hall. Partly in commemoration of his vow, and partly perhaps to lighten the loneliness of his self-inflicted penance, William Kempe set himself the task of superintending the making of seven fish-ponds—one each year—which he stocked with different kinds of fish. One of the ponds may still be seen, not far from the ancient Hall—a beautiful sheet of water, partly surrounded by lofty elms, the favoured haunt of wild-duck and other water-fowl. The others are mostly drained, and in summer their beds are gorgeous with purple loosestrife and blue forget-me-nots. The taciturn squire only lived just long enough to complete his seven years of self-imposed silence. Early on the following morning he tried to speak, but speech had failed him. A fit of paralysis had seized him, and in a few hours he was dead. They carried him down the wide oaken staircase, and through the Tudor doorway, and past the seven fish-ponds, and across the river, down to the old village church, and there, in the vault of the chapel of his forefathers, they laid him beside Philippa his wife, who had died five years previously, within two years of the commencement of her husband's fearful vow. The parish register simply has the following entry:—
'1623. Aug. 21. Mrs. Philippa Kempe, Wife of Mr. William, Esquire.' 'Mr. William, Esquire,' died in 1628, and the marble monument erected to his memory in Kempe's Chapel tells us how he was—'*Pious, just, hospitable, master of himself so much that what others scarce doe by force and penalties, He did by a voluntary constancy, Hold his peace for seven years.*' Mrs. Philippa is described as '*of a chaste life and religion, discrete in both.*' They only left '*one daughter and childe Jane,*'

endowing her, according to the epitaph, '*with a double portion of graces and fortune.*'

Shortly after the death of William Kempe we find a remarkable man as vicar of the parish. This was Stephen Marshall, the famous Presbyterian preacher and chief chaplain of the Parliamentary army. His influence, says Clarendon, was greater than that of any archbishop. He violently opposed Episcopacy, and took a leading part in the State changes of the time. His opinions may be gathered from the following letter, written by one who heard him preach in Westminster Abbey:—'What do you think he told us? Why, that if there were no kings, no queens, no lords, no ladies, no gentlemen or gentlewomen in the world, it would be no loss at all to the Almighty. This he said over forty times, which made me remember it whether I would or not.' One cannot help wondering what influence this stern Puritan had on the quiet village. Had he noticed, and if so, did he approve of, the figure of the crucifix carved on the ancient oaken door in the southern porch; and, still more, of the jester with his cap and bells on the fourteenth-century screen, which divides the south chantry chapel from the main body of the church? What was his opinion as to the altar-tomb of John Berners, knight, and of Elizabeth his wife, who departed this life early in the sixteenth century, which tomb is decorated with eight monastic figures all in fair preservation, while on the beautiful brasses let into the black slab of Purbeck marble which covers the monument is inscribed in Latin the pious prayer that God may have mercy upon their souls? Around these words may be seen a deep scratch, as though they had excited Puritan disapproval, and one or two of the figures in the niches are broken, but there is no evidence as to when the damage was done. A curious memorandum is to be found on the first page of an old book of parish accounts. It is dated March 17, 1632, and is a permission—a strange one indeed as coming from a Puritan—granted by Stephen Marshall, 'so farre as in mee lyeth, to Mrs. Dorathy Meade, & Anne the wife of James Chaplain, & Susannah the wife of James Choate, *to eate flesh in their knowne sicknesses . . . so long as their sickness shall continue, & no longer.*' This remarkable '*lycence*' to eat meat during Lent, in the handwriting of the famous Puritan preacher, is duly witnessed, '*this day & yere,*' by the two parish churchwardens.

How Stephen Marshall—the Primate of the Presbyterian Church,' as Dean Stanley calls him—came to be vicar of so obscure a parish, we are not told. The living from the time of

the Reformation to the middle of the eighteenth century seems to have been in the gift of the Kempe family. There were Marshalls, however, kinsmen of the great preacher, then living in the parish, and to their influence he probably owed his preferment. They occupied a place called Sculpins, then a noble mansion with a bowling-green attached to it, now a dilapidated farmhouse, a mere fragment of the original building, around which the position of the ancient moat may still be traced. Tradition asserts that a subterranean passage used to run from the mansion to Hedingham Castle, some six or seven miles away, and that in the time of the Civil War it was stored with all manner of treasures, which remain hidden to this day. Often has the secret passage been sought for, but in vain. The old people, however, do not doubt that vast hoards of treasures are somewhere concealed. The last of the family—Sir John Marshall—who lived in the early part of the last century, is said to have kept open house on every Thursday throughout the year.

But times have changed since the old baronet was laid to rest beneath the chancel floor. There is no one to 'keep open house' now. The old order changes, giving place to the new. And the new, so far at least as the village is concerned, is not better, but worse. The ancient families have died out. There are no Kempes, or Berners, or Marshalls left. In most instances their mansions have fallen into decay: a wing perhaps of the old building is still standing, and serves as a modern farmhouse. The staircase is there, some six or seven feet wide, but the oaken balusters are thickly coated with paint. The house is not even occupied by a tenant-farmer; only a bailiff or a care-taker lives there. The agricultural depression of late years has driven the old race of yeoman into bankruptcy or exile. The place that once knew them now knows them no more. On the tombstones in the churchyard on the southern slope, where hard by grows the wild sage in abundance, you may read names once honoured, and rightly so, in the village-councils—names that are fast becoming extinct in the neighbourhood. Outsiders inhabit the old homes, while

Year by year the landscape grows
Familiar to the stranger's child.

It is with feelings of genuine regret that one thinks of the old familiar faces. They were a kindly people, those honest yeomen and their families, and masterful withal. They took their part in the affairs of the parish, and what they did they did well. Even

the Sunday schools were but little trouble in those days. For twenty-five years they were superintended by a maiden lady, tall, stately, and determined, whose symbol of authority was an umbrella. Absolute order reigned. A tap upon the floor with the said umbrella would produce immediate silence. Once only was the signal disregarded, when the daring culprit found himself seized by the collar and ignominiously ejected. We were stern Protestants in those days, and no semblance of Popery could be tolerated. It was bad enough that the church bells should break the silence of the sabbath; they should not be allowed to disturb the solemnity of the weekly prayer-meeting. Well, it happened one night that just as the meeting had begun in an ancient attic overlooking the churchyard, the beautiful peal of eight bells rung out in the frosty air. It was more than any Protestant could be expected to put up with. And what is more, they would not put up with it. And so, with calm determination, the stately lady arose from her knees on the attic floor, and laid hold of her faithful umbrella; and then, marching with great dignity to the Norman belfry, she ordered every one of the eight ringers out of church. The men fled before the dread symbol of authority. Then, locking the door behind her, she returned to her devotions, with the church key in her ample pocket. There is one clause, or rather a portion of a clause, in the Nicene Creed, which always seemed to the good people of the parish to savour of the Popish doctrine of baptismal regeneration—‘*I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.*’ The latter part of this sentence our Protestant friend would never utter. She always recited the creed in a firm and distinct voice, not infrequently beating time to the periods with her eye-glass, but having arrived at the objectionable confession, she would stop, shut her lips tightly with a smack of orthodox determination, and stand motionless, until, the unsound words being finished, she would recommence with renewed energy, both of voice and action, and end with a very loud ‘*Amen.*’ One Sunday morning a terrible thing happened. The schoolgirls—who in their white caps and tippets formed the choir and sat on benches in the chancel—obeying some mysterious order, actually dared to commit the heinous sin of turning to the east at the recital of the creed. The movement caught the good lady’s eye. Not a moment was to be lost: the very existence of the Protestant religion was at stake. So, seizing her trusty friend, she marched out of her pew and into the chancel, and with wonderful alacrity she caught hold of each

child's arm with the hook of her umbrella, and twisted them all swiftly round before they had recited six sentences of the creed. Such downright Popery was never again attempted, at least in her lifetime. It is no doubt done now, and perhaps the little girls in their white caps and tippets have given way to coarse boys in cassocks and surplices—or should I say to fair-haired choristers?—but the good lady is at rest on the sunny slope of the old churchyard, and such doings do not trouble her there.

Very simple were the services in those bygone days, but let no one say that they were not attended, and well attended. The complaint, now so often heard, of the absence of men from church could not then be made. Why, the tramp of the labourers, as they marched into church at the ceasing of the bell to their block of benches in the north-west corner of the nave, was like that of a company of soldiers. They came to church on Sunday afternoons as regularly as they went to work on Monday mornings. It never seemed to occur to them to stop away. Some would come, across the heavy clay fields, from hamlets two and three and even four miles away. It is true that they did not always respond throughout the service, but then not one in ten could read a single line; sometimes perhaps they continued sitting when they ought to have stood; and now and then, it might be, on a warm summer's afternoon, or after a mug of Sunday ale at the 'Green Man,' they would doze off to sleep for a moment, but only for a moment. Old Master Hills, the dog-rapper, was at hand, and down would come his long stick on the thick skull of the sleeping rustic, with a crack that echoed through the building. Many a time have I heard that sound, and I can see now the spare form of the old man as he perambulated up and down the church during the sermon. He has been dead now these five-and-twenty years past, and his office, once recognised in almost every parish, has become extinct. It is also true that we did not 'hold' with over-much music during the service, and that we *said* the 'Amens' like good Protestants, while, as for the responses, we were nobly led by the aged clerk, who occupied his desk beneath the pulpit. But the labourers came to church in those days.

Many were the superstitions which lingered among the older inhabitants of the village. The churchyard especially was regarded with feelings of awe, and few even of the younger generation cared to cross it after dark. It was not what they *had* seen, but what they *might* see, that caused them to shun it. If asked their reasons for avoiding it, they would only shake their

heads and say, with a grin, as '*how they shouldn't like*'; while the ancient dames in the almshouses would solemnly declare that they 'had their feelin's, and didn't want to see their old men.' 'There was no tellin',' they said, 'what folk's speerits might not be up to, if so be as they hadn't gone to the good place.' The old ladies were fond of speculating on the fate of their departed neighbours. The future world, with them, was divided into two states, each fixed at the moment of death, and endless. One was spoken of as 'the good place'; the other was only hinted at as '*t'other*.' When old Betty Johnson died, 'she what had a nasty tongue, that she had,' they came to the charitable conclusion that if 'she had a-gone to the good place, *she didn't ought*.'

A sad tragedy once happened in the quiet village. A poor woman drowned herself and her baby in a tiny stream that runs through the further end of the village. Before long some were to be found who had 'heard tell as how' there was 'summat' to be seen every night at a certain hour. So-and-so had '*seed*' it. Now, exactly opposite to the scene of the tragedy there stood a picturesque old cottage, with a well-kept garden in front of it, in which cottage lived an old lady of the name of Mrs. Dodd. Now, Mrs. Dodd felt injured at the talk of the village. She lived opposite the haunted stream, and if anyone saw 'it,' she ought to. But in spite of sitting up, and looking out of the window at all hours of the night, she saw nothing more alarming than the white rails of the rustic bridge and the stunted bushes at the water's edge. And so she came to the conclusion that there was 'nought to be seen.' 'Ghosts!' the old lady would say in scorn, 'I don't hold with 'em. If so be as that 'ere woman hev a-gone to the good place, 'taint likely as how she be wishful to a-waddle in that 'ere old ditch'—and then, with a solemn voice and a shake of her bony finger, she would add, 'and if she've a-gone to *t'other*, she'll be *kep*' there.'

A firm belief in '*the very old un*,' as a real and ever-present personage, was a most distinctive article of the rustic creed. Everything that went wrong, from the tragedy of a suicide to a fit of indigestion, was laid directly at his door. 'I feels bad; and I don't know *how* I feels,' an old woman would say. 'You depent on't, dear, that's that 'ere old Satan a-trying of ye,' a sympathising neighbour would reply. 'He's at the bottom of *everythink*,' as Mrs. Dodd would say, 'and the worst of it is, that there's no catching 'im; but if once I could a-get hold on 'im, I'd punish 'im.'

Another article of their belief was in '*tokens of folks' end*.' A

few years ago some workmen were engaged in removing an old building which had served as a dove-cot to successive generations of pigeons ever since the time when William Kempe busied himself with his fish-ponds. As the men were eating their breakfasts the family butler appeared, and asked one of them, Jim Suckling by name, what he had been doing in the walled garden half an hour before. Jim denied that he '*had a-been*' there, and appealed to his mates in confirmation of his statement. 'Then,' said the butler, 'it was your ghost, and you'll be dead before nightfall.' And so it came about: the wall of the building caved in, and Jim Suckling was crushed to death beneath the ruins. 'I told him so,' said the butler, 'for I *seed* his ghost in the garden.' Off the main road, about one mile from the village, there stands, beside a rough cart-track, a lonely cottage, in which lived old Master French and his missus. For years the old couple had lived there, and at last, when unable to work any longer, they managed somehow to muddle along on their miserable pittance of parish pay. At least they had their liberty, and the old man, lame and half-blind as he was, could yet amuse himself on his patch of garden, and shovel up the scrapings on the Bardfield road. In course of time the old man was taken ill, and on going to inquire how he was, I found that his missus had made up her mind that he would never recover, and was informing him of the fact in a vigorous fashion. '*You're a-gewing*, Master French,' said she, standing at the foot of the old bedstead, and shaking her bent finger. '*You're a-gewing to yer long home*, Master French; you'll niver get up off o' that 'ere bed, niver no more, Master French. For I've *heard tokens* of yer end, and the clock hev a-stopped.' The poor old man took it all as a matter of course, only saying wistfully that he would like, if so be the Lord was a-willin', just to go once more a-hobblin' down of the Barful road, and look on the green 'arth.' 'Niver no more, Master French,' repeated the old woman, 'niver, till you're took to yer long home.' Under the circumstances, what could old Master French do but depart in peace, and be content with being carried down the '*Barful*' road to his long sleep in the green churchyard?

By the roadside, not far from the old Elizabethan mansion, there may be noticed a small depression in the pathway, to which local superstition assigns a curious history. The old folk will tell you—that is, if you can get them to talk about it—that it marks the spot where, many years previously, a young farmer was thrown from his horse and killed. Since then every attempt to level the

ground has failed. Many a time has it been tried, but always with the same result. The next morning the hole will be open as before. So at least the old folk say; and that the depression may be seen, or at any rate might be seen a few years back, the most sceptical could not deny.

But times have greatly changed. The old-world stories, in which our forefathers implicitly believed, will not stand the light of modern education. In spite of the epitaph on the walls of the village church, and the evidence of the seven fishponds, some perhaps will soon be found to doubt or deny the story of the squire's silence. The buried treasures at Sculpins and the secret subterranean passage will be laughed at as old wives' fables. There will be no more ghosts in the churchyard, and the mysterious hollow will be filled up. Everything is changed. The old hedgerows, glorious in early summer-time with honey-suckle and wild roses, have been stubbed up, and almost every tree has been cut down. Not a bank is left for the violets and the primroses and the lesser celandine. A dreary expanse of arable land, unbroken by even a solitary elm or holly-bush, is a sight common enough now. The wide stretches of waste land, besides the country lanes, where in autumn flocks of goldfinches might be seen feeding on the thistle-seed, are mostly enclosed and cultivated; and the birds are few in the district. The woods are strictly preserved, and all kinds of hawks and owls are indiscriminately destroyed. The kite, or *puttock*, as it was locally called, not uncommon in the middle of the century, is now unknown; and but rarely a buzzard is seen. Even sparrow-hawks and kestrels are becoming rare. Now and then an otter finds its way up the stream, but only to be hunted down and killed. A polecat has not been seen for years; and the last badger is dead. Some of the rarer wild flowers, too, are no longer to be found. Modern cultivation and scientific farming which demolishes the hedgerows and stubbs up the copses, and takes in every square yard of common land, is fatal to the flora as well as the fauna of a neighbourhood. The beautiful fritillary once blossomed abundantly in a damp meadow near the trout stream; you can hardly find a leaf now. The rare martagon lily formerly flourished by the side of a green lane bordered by a thick, lofty hedge; the hedge has been levelled and the plant is gone. The oxlip—not a 'cross' between the primrose and the cowslip, which somewhat resembles it—but the real oxlip, what Darwin once called the Bardfield oxlip, is still common in the neighbourhood; and in one spinney, to which the nightingale

returns every spring, it is the characteristic flower. Leopard's-bane, too, holds its own in a private plantation not far from the Tudor mansion; and in the Pightel the Virgin Mary thistle blows. Every summer the swifts shriek about the church tower, and the swallows build in the chimneys of the ancient almshouse. The cuckoo's voice will be heard in May, and the red-backed shrike will nest in the vicarage garden. The ring-doves will coo in the yew trees, and a pair of moor-hens may frequent the pond. And yet everything seems changed. The old families are gone. New names fill the parish registers. The black oak furniture—chests carved with beautiful designs, and chairs, and cabinets with many a secret drawer—once common in the farmhouses, has all gone to the hammer. Boards are nailed over the windows of the empty cottages on the green. Poverty is stamped on the face of the village. Change and decay is everywhere apparent. Only the church bells ring out merrily from the Norman tower, and the stream flows silently on.

JOHN VAUGHAN.

The Minister's Money.

IT is hard to wish for books and have no right to buy them. This long, narrow shop, propped between two fashion stores, and seeming to bulge behind with the weight of learning on its shelves, tempted the minister sorely. Two volumes he wanted especially. His heart leaped up to see the dear old covers. They had been familiar long ago. Within was treasure that, poured into the mould of his mind, should yield distinction to many a sermon. The dread that haunted him was of dearth when he stood in his pulpit. He had no critic so cruel as the Reverend Richard East.

His thin, white fingers went over the roughened calf with a strange caressing touch. He removed the first and looked at the price. His guess was a scholar's shot and close to the mark. The books were rare and three pounds was asked.

The minister could not haggle. It was an art beyond him. Nobody gave him discount in Stokeley. 'You'd get more of a gloss on living if you'd clip the edges of your tradesmen's bills, as they deserve and expect,' said Mr. Pankhurst, his foremost elder. 'Yes—thank you,' said the minister. His weak blue eyes were full of dreams and his mouth wore a smile. The thing was impracticable—cut off from him.

So was the right to delve in these mines of erudition and eloquence. Three pounds ten was exactly the sum he had saved with a struggle to spend in London. The odd shillings were gone already, and the series of meetings he had come up to attend only began yesterday. The sterile talk at a conference was before him now. There the pity of it all met him and made a sigh leave his lips. He had ceased to hope that the session which was his business would help him; but he knew that if he had these two tall folios he would be a broader man and a fuller preacher. Poverty pressed him back towards threadbare themes. Even if the trader would take less he was forbidden to buy.

The minister buttoned his coat about his spare stooping figure and was soon seated in an omnibus. He had wasted time, and the City clocks convicted him.

'Crowded out, but in good company; two laggards together.'

Behind was the dark face of Caleb Pankhurst, a strong man, and a rich, and a pitiless. The minister's nerves were awry, and the whisper, which was a suppressed shout, shook them. The odd dream smile that came and went by a law remote, unfathomable, was his only answer. But he sat down where his elder pointed.

When the sitting ended there was a collection. The Reverend Richard East felt for the small watch-case purse which held his three pounds and the shilling he had destined for the box to-day. It was not to be found. The flush came up and the veins of the minister's forehead were darkened by the quick tides of fear.

'Gone—stolen!' he cried hoarsely.

'What do you mean? Had your pocket picked? Of how much?'

Caleb Pankhurst's pity was vastly like scorn to a fine ear. But he meant well by the minister. 'Talks well. Don't know the world a bit,' was his usual verdict.

'How much have you lost? You'll never see a cent of it again, you may depend on that. It is really gone, I suppose?'

They stood in the lobby now. The minister was slow in answering.

'Of course I'll help you. The money's missing, don't you say?'

'Yes.'

'Five pounds? One—two?' He measured the shy man's means too accurately to suggest large figures. It was a meagre salary in Heber Lane.

'Three pounds and a shilling or two over.'

It was a queer choked gasp. The minister was violently trembling. Masterful impatience regarded him with surprise, and forgot the cloth.

'Tut, man, never mind! Don't addle your head over it. There are worse troubles for some of us. I'll give it you out and out; not a loan—you understand. It'll run me close; but I am at Stokeley to-night, so no matter. I insist on your taking it!'

The minister put out his hands, as if to wave back the gleaming gold coins. There was passion in the gesture. But it failed, and he knew that he was glad it failed.

'A gift!' That was what he repeated many times as he went

up Chancery Lane and down Holborn. He stayed himself there. It was like a rock in the shadowy sea. Beyond were perplexities.

He stopped at the old book-shop, and the books were not gone. He had had a lively dread of this, and it had winged his feet. The haste and anxiety were alike gratuitous. He breathed more freely as a glance reassured him. But a fever was in his fingers as he lifted out both volumes and went forward.

'I will take these,' he said.

As the string snapped the vendor looked into the white eager face with a half smile. It was as though he knew somewhat and words were near. But he said 'Thank you,' and the minister supposed that untithed cash pleased him. Perhaps he found the unquestioning customer rare.

In the retrospect it seemed to Richard East as if he were more mechanism than electing, determining man throughout the crucial episode of his career. In a way it went with that theory that he never remembered the route he had taken to Finsbury and his hotel. There is, however, the other hypothesis, that the moment when the floods rose and swept him from every anchorage of his life was so supreme that trivialities were erased. He may have forgotten because brain and heart staggered.

A youth ushered into the room caused the minister to look up. In a scholar's ecstasy he had been poring over his prize.

'Sam!' he said, 'I am glad to see you. But how did you find me out?' He stepped towards the boy with outstretched hand. A scowl and a pair of flashing black eyes repelled him, and he stopped half-way, irresolute and surprised. Young Pankhurst was a sad scamp, but he had never before shown want of respect to the minister.

'Father told me I should find you at Temple's Hotel,' said a surly voice, through which an agony rang. 'This is it, Mr. East: father gave you three pounds to-day, or, at least, he said so. He couldn't help me—till to-morrow. Then it will be too late, and I shall be a rogue and ruined. I stopped the money in the office. It was only for a few hours. I knew father was coming up, and was sure of getting it. I never did such a thing before, and I didn't mean to now. I hate myself!'

'Did you tell Mr. Pankhurst?'

'I did not dare. He would never forgive me. Now there is the Thames—unless you can do something. Three pounds, sir, and not a word to father? But you won't!'

In the midst of his own shame and misery he was puzzled by

the minister. He searched for reproach, and there was none. The dream eyes cleared, the pallid face slightly twitched, and then Richard East bent over his books and unfolded a grey wrapping paper. Was this coldness and indifference a calculated condemnation? The prodigal's gorge rose.

'I see. A minister is less than a man. He is a prig. And the brotherliness he preaches is a lie.'

The words were missiles, hot from a furnace of despair and indignation. But they did not scorch. The minister's outer ear received them but not the inner. When he stood up he was curiously erect, and the worst spasm of soul darkness had passed.

His tones were richer and sweeter than any worshipper had heard them in Heber Lane.

'If you will go with me a little distance—it is not far,' he said, 'I think, perhaps, I can help you. Yes, in any case I will promise to help you. Do not fear on that score. There is a resource.'

The minister's hand touched the watch which was a present from his first charge. Watches can be pledged. It was a gold lever.

And still no rebuke, no lecture, no warning. It was very strange.

Through the streets the two picked their path. The journey was longer than the minister's words had led his companion to suppose. It ended at a book-shop, and now it appeared to the lad that a bargain was to be struck for two tarnished folios. He had a poor opinion of old books, and his trust once more wavered.

'Can I speak with your master one minute?' said the minister to the brisk salesman, who hustled down through a maze of book heaps.

'Certainly, sir.'

Something in the manner quickened obedience, and soon the short be-spectacled figure of the proprietor stood at his desk. Richard East fought a battle as he faced him. Was so great a humiliation really necessary? The watch would meet the difficulty and save Sam Pankhurst, and it could be redeemed. Silence was still possible. But not, as he judged, silence and any lofty life. With a puritan's eyes he surveyed the situation, and with a puritan's purpose he spoke.

'It is an unpleasant errand,' he said; 'I want you to take back my purchase of this morning.'

'We never do that. It is impossible.'

‘No, I suppose not, as a rule. I quite see. But I ask you especially to favour me now. I had no right to buy them. It was not a mistake. It was worse—far worse than that. This morning I looked and looked until I dared to covet. Then I went away to an important meeting and forgot them. I unfortunately forgot something else. Putting my hand in my pocket I suddenly missed my purse. A friend was with me—this young man’s father. He will substantiate much of my story. You know this?’

‘Yes.’ The problem as yet was insoluble to Sam, though he replied readily.

‘I cried out that my purse was gone, stolen. At the instant I thought so. And my good friend at once came to my rescue, and proposed to make good my loss. He would not have me a penny the poorer. Then it was that I fell into temptation.’

The voice trembled, the blue eyes were shadowed by the cloud. But the minister’s will triumphed.

‘I cannot say that I did not know what I was doing,’ he said. ‘The light was with me but I put it away. Two things I distinctly remembered. One was that three pounds would buy those books, precious when I was a student. The other was that my money was not lost at all. I had changed its place before I left my hotel, for greater security. I could have produced it. Instead, I left the word unrecalled, and took money under false pretences. And—that is all. Except that I am very sorry to have to make the request, but if you will take back the books I will not fail to remit to you when I return home at the end of the week the margin, whatever that may be, between your price to me and your price of me. I will give you my name and address.’

The minister had gained in presence and in dignity as he proceeded, though he knew it not. He waited the decision. But no power on earth could have made him resume possession of the load he had laid down.

The odd smile, a trifle graver, glimmered on the bookseller’s face. He gathered up books and wrapping and threw them aside.

‘I saw the fascination grip you this morning,’ he said drily. ‘I know what it is. Books are my wine. I knew you would come back. But I did not expect you twice—and thus. It is unusual; but here is three pounds.’

‘Pay it, please, to this young man—my friend’s son.’

When Sam Pankhurst was gone it occurred to the minister

that he had said nothing to him in reprobation of his own conduct.

He had done infinitely better. An object-lesson is more than a homily. Shame had called out shame, and courage courage; and Sam told his father everything in his blunt boyish way.

'I shall overlook it this once in Sam's case because of his youth and his confession, and this once only. He knows my mind on that point,' said the elder of Heber Lane to the minister, with a cold pity; 'but I think you see that we can't do that with a minister. It's different.'

'Yes,' said Richard East, with a quiet assent that sucked the wind from the elder's sails.

'There's the—scandal,' he stammered. To his astonishment he respected at last the man whom he had come to coerce and cast out as a moral ruin.

'Quite so; and to deliver Heber Lane from that I have resigned. You will find my letter at your house when you get back. Good-bye, Mr. Pankhurst, and thank you. You were very generous, and I do thank you sincerely.'

The two men shook hands, and the minister's clasp was cordial.

Was he hero, or inveterate dreamer and weakling? The elder could answer most questions that raised the issue of character with a confidence all his own. But not that one. He grappled with it, and, metaphorically, it rent him. The next day, before the breath of impending change had stirred the sluggish air of Heber Lane, he was again in the minister's study.

'Don't go away through me, sir,' he said. 'I can keep a secret, and Sam shall.'

He was in earnest and at length prevailed. When he reached home he burnt a simple little note that vacated a pulpit. All that a scanty congregation of sectaries knew was, that the minister seemed re-made since the London meetings. Pain had taught him the passion thrill which was more than eloquence.

W. J. LACEY.

At the Sign of the Ship.

EVERY reader of Mr. Froude's admirable Lecture in LONG-MAN'S for November must sympathise, if not with all that he says, with what he says about the handwriting of the sixteenth century. The examples of it in the Muniment Room of St. Leonard's and St. Salvator's Colleges are enough for me, and Mr. Froude has read thousands of such scrawls, worse than Hittite hieroglyphs, and in Spanish! Verily 'he has laboured more than they all.' But perhaps his most acrimonious critics did not accuse Mr. Froude of not labouring; indeed, he has not only laboured, but enabled others to work, by presenting his transcripts of Spanish MSS. to the British Museum. But he had to construct a dead world, as well as to collect materials. We all 'construct' our own universe, as metaphysicians say, and every historian must construct his own special period. There is no mortal mirror which reflects facts with perfect accuracy. Every man's book on history is a presentation of facts which have passed through a temperament. Now we cannot all construct history alike, any more than we construct the universe alike. About interesting people, especially ladies, we are bound to differ; and a Scot may take up the cudgels for Queen Mary against Mr. Froude. He was arguing that modern opinion, and therefore modern historians, 'incline to take the side of distinguished sufferers.' I cite the whole passage:—

Again, to note another tendency. Modern opinion, and therefore modern historians, incline to take the side of distinguished sufferers. Men and women convicted of treason are generally held to have been condemned unjustly. The historian's virtue is

To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,
And curse that Justice did it.

I will mention an instance or two.

Writers of note, English and Scotch, require us to believe that Mary Stuart's Casket Letters were forged by the Lords of the Congre-

gation as an excuse for dethroning her. These Letters were examined by the Scotch Privy Council. They were submitted to the Scotch Parliament. The circumstances of the discovery were published at a time when, if there was foul play, it could have been instantly detected. The Letters were brought to London and laid before the Queen and her ministers, to whom Mary Stuart's handwriting was perfectly familiar, and again to a Committee of Peers, among whom there were her warmest friends. The ambassadors of the Catholic Powers at Elizabeth's court were equally eager to prove her innocent; yet we do not find a trace of suspicion among them. Yet we are required to believe that all these persons were taken in by a forgery so clumsy that her modern defenders, who have not the originals before them, imagine that they can detect it with ease—that Elizabeth and Burghley and Walsingham, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and others of honourable fame, were parties to the fraud; all because such persons think it unlikely that an interesting woman could have written those Letters.

And, strange to say, they see no difficulty in such an hypothesis, and English historical opinion is content to leave the question open—to leave open, that is, whether Elizabeth and those eminent public servants of hers, who carried England through the most dangerous crisis of its national existence, were among the basest villains that ever disgraced humanity. We may as well abandon the study of history if we are to carry it on upon such wilful principles.

Now I am not an enthusiastic partisan of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. She had beauty, manners, courage; she was placed, by no fault of her own, in a perfectly impossible position for a Catholic and a woman. It is extremely probable that she knew there was a design to take off her husband, Darnley; and if she were cognisant of that, and took no measures to prevent it, she was, of course, no saint. Granting that she was not, neither were the rest of them. Henry VIII. intrigued with Scotch assassins; Moray was capable of anything; Knox approved of murders, and, to my thinking, instigated them; Darnley led the butchers of Rizzio, before the eyes of Mary, his wife, though he knew, and all his company of assassins knew, that in the circumstances the adventure might be fatal to her and her unborn child. As to Elizabeth, I presume that her conduct at the time of Mary's judicial murder, and before it—her evasions, her efforts to clear herself by disavowing and punishing her agents, may be supposed to settle the question of her pure, loyal, and amiable character. Among this crowd, Mary, even if a murderess, is conspicuous for her charm, her courage, her loyalty to her faith and her friends. She was no sour bloodthirsty fanatic, no pedant, no hypocrite;

and if she was guilty (with many of her lords) of knowing that Darnley was to be killed, she still remains the most human, the most winning of these astonishingly unscrupulous gangs, the Scotch and English politicians of the age. The question as to whether she did or did not write the celebrated 'Casket Letters' to Bothwell is rather a question of bibliographical than of historical importance. It is a question of documents, dates, inferences. Mary may not have written them, and yet may have been guilty. Her accusers may not have forged them; *non omnia possumus omnes*, as Partridge says. But as Morton was the man who kept the Letters for more than a year, it may be remarked that the suspicion of forgery is not wholly unnatural. Morton, like Charles Honeyman, 'would rather lie than not.' Nobody will say that his word, or that his character, is worth a brass bodle.

* * *

Suppose we say, for the sake of argument, that Mary was perfectly capable of writing the Letters. It does not seem less reasonable to admit that Moray, Morton, & Co. were capable of garbling or of forging them. The question is not, Was Mary guilty? but, Does all that we know of the Letters justify us in declaring her guilty on that evidence? Could a jury condemn her on that evidence to-day? Is there no more kindly way of regarding facts than Mr. Froude's?

* * *

'Writers of note, English and Scotch,' he says—we must add French and German and Danish, Dr. Bresslau, M. Philippson, and others—are not happy about the genuine character of these Letters, or of all of them. These *savants*, both of England and of Scotland, both of Germany and of France and Denmark, experts in such discussions, are not absolutely staggered by the hypothesis so alarming to Mr. Froude, that, in his words, Elizabeth and her servants 'were among the basest villains that ever disgraced humanity.' *Eh bien*, I am not staggered either. Mr. Froude's is one way of putting the matter. There was a revolution; it was a question, or seemed to be a question, of life or death. Men and women put their scruples in their pockets. *They stuck at nothing*. Some had a text from the Old Testament which served the turn of their consciences. Some had *salus Reipublicæ suprema lex*. One can believe that Morton, Moray, Elizabeth, Cecil, Buchanan, all the rest of them, accepted

dubious evidence, forged, or fabled, without regarding them as, personally, 'the basest villains,' and so forth. Revolutions are not made with rose-water. These gentlemen and ladies had been in many a black, treacherous business. The game was played with no laws, as it always will be played when men's backs are at the wall. There is every reason to believe that George Wishart, a man undeniably full of all the virtues, was engaged, with the knowledge of Henry VIII., in an assassination plot. Mr. Froude says that he would have been a singular exception among 'his Protestant countrymen' if he had recoiled. No evidence to character, no respect for famous English, Scotch, or French names is worth a bawbee in this argument. Nobody stuck at anything. English, Scotch, French, and German 'writers of note' are not unacquainted with these considerations. To write history with a full knowledge of them may lead to either conclusion.

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'These Letters were examined by the Scotch Privy Council' says Mr. Froude. I turn to Mr. Henderson's *The Casket Letters*, page 19. Mr. Henderson defends the authenticity of the Letters. They came into Morton's hands, according to his own account, on June 20, 1567. What Morton says is not evidence, by itself, but 'let that flea stick to the wa'. As to the 'Scotch Privy Council' (if this means a meeting of the Confederate Nobles, Dec. 4, 1567), what happened is recorded in a minute of the meeting. There the Letters are said to bear the Queen's signature. They don't. In the Act of Parliament (Dec. 15) this description is omitted. We must remember that the Act of the Council was a deliberate, well-weighed manifesto, by men who were trying to justify their own conduct in rising against their Queen. Yet, in such a document, they make an allegation (that the Letters were signed) which they afterwards silently drop, and this conduct throws suspicion on the whole proceedings of the Nobles.

* *

'The Letters were examined by the Scotch Privy Council' Mr. Froude avers, with the Nobles. But the Scotch Privy Council were most inconsistently mendacious. In their Act of Secret Council they declare that they took up arms against Mary, and on June 15 seized her person, 'because of her ainis default,' as 'be divers her previe Letters written and subscrivet with her own hand' she had proved her guilt of Darnley's murder. The rising and the

seizure of the Queen took place *before* the Letters came into Morton's hands, on June 20. Thus the Privy Council allege that they rose in arms because of documents which they did not possess, documents signed by the Queen, though no such documents existed. Men rebel, and later say that they rebel because of information contained in documents which they did not possess when they rose, and which they describe wrongly, in a cautiously-laboured manifesto. What are their characters and their evidence worth? As to the submitting of the documents 'to the Scotch Parliament,' Mr. Henderson says (p. 24) 'it is not stated whether the "Casket Letters" were read to the Assembly, or whether the representations of the Regent and the Privy Council were taken on trust. In like manner, no mention is made in the Act of Parliament of the documents having been read.' The most we know is from the declaration of Mary's friends (Sept. 12, 1568) 'yif it be is alledgit, that her Majestie's writing, *producit* in Parliament, sould preive her grace culpabill, it may be answerit: That ther is na place mentioun made in it, be the quhilk her Hieness may be convict, albeit it were her ainis hand-writ, as it is not. Also, the samin is devysit be thameselfis' (Moray's party) 'in sum principal and substantious clausis.' So Mary's defenders still argue, as we shall see; but is Mr. Henderson right in thinking that those remarks prove the Letters to have been *read* in Parliament? 'Productit' they were, by way of justifying acts committed *before* the Letters were in the hands of Mary's enemies. So much for the Scotch Privy Council and Scotch Parliament.

* * *

'The circumstances of the Discovery were published at a time when, if there was foul play, it could have been instantly detected.' The Letters, according to a later declaration by Morton, were captured from an agent of Bothwell's, named Dalglish, on June 20, 1567. But, in the strict sense of words, 'the circumstances of their discovery' were never 'published' at all till 1882 or 1889. A declaration was made by Morton, in December 1568, to a *secret* tribunal of the English Privy Council, with other Lords, sitting at Westminster; 'Her Majesty making them her counsellors, *specially to keep the same secret to themselves.*' (*Journals of Proceedings*. Henderson, p. 187.)

Now, in 1887 the British Museum acquired some MSS. which had belonged to Sir Alexander Malet. Among them was one, now folio 216 of No. 32,691 of 'Additional MSS.' The *pro-*

venance and pedigree of this document are, as far as I am aware, unknown. It declares itself to be (1) 'Ye copie of that qch was geven to Mr. Secretarie Cecill upon Thursday the viiith of December 1568,' a year and a half after the 'discovery' of the Letters; that is, a copy of a Declaration of the discovery, then given to Cecil by Morton, the discoverer. (2) It avows itself to be 'the trew copie' of the Declaration made by Morton to 'the Commissioners and Council of England, sitting in Westminster, Dec. 29, 1568.' So far Mr. Henderson. (3) The MS. announces itself as 'the copy of a letter gevin to Secretairie Cecill.'¹ The existence of this copy of threefold character—copy of a letter or declaration given to Cecil on December 8, or given then to Cecil, and on December 29 to the English Commissioners (on neither date is the Commission known to have sat, but they did sit on December 9), is all the evidence known to me for maintaining that the circumstances of the discovery were published at a time when, if there was foul play, it could have been instantly detected. One would prefer to say that the Letters were *divulged*, in circumstances not, perhaps, entirely favourable to a hearing of Mary's case. Were she and her advisers ever even allowed to see the Letters, or even copies of them, at that time? Of course they were not. So much for the divulging of the circumstances of the discovery. If the copy of the document be authentic and accurate, Morton made, to a secret tribunal, a statement 'on his honour.' A cat would not be whipped for stealing cream, as someone has said, on Morton's evidence. And if there were friends of Mary's present, English nobles, when the Letters were produced at Westminster, why, they remained her friends! Again, the Letters were taken from Dalglish. If, as Mr. Froude says, 'foul play could have been instantly detected,' Dalglish should have been examined. But dead men tell no tales. Mary's enemies had killed Dalglish. They *did* take his deposition. 'No question about the Casket or its contents was put to him' (Skelton). This is where Queen Mary's advocate (who need not believe in her innocence) is likely to take his stand. The actual Letters were produced, late in the inquiry, to a Commission which was naturally influenced by Elizabeth's wishes, which could not examine an important witness, because he was defunct, and which could not compare Morton's account of Dalglish's capture with Sir James Melville's statement that he was taken, a month later, in Orkney.

¹ See Mr. Skelton's essay, 'The Casket Letters and Mary Stuart' (*Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1889, p. 804, Note 2).

One does not know if Maitland was present or absent. Morton says Maitland was with him when the Casket was seized, and I own that Maitland comes ill out of the whole affair. He certainly knew the real truth, but he seems to have been silent.

* * *

'The Letters were brought to London and laid before the Queen and her Ministers.' Here, at last, all are agreed that 'the French version' of the letters was actually seen at Westminster. There had already been some hocus-pocus with Elizabeth. 'The principal points' of the Letters had been laid before her *in Scotch*. She told the Spanish Ambassador in July that the Letters were a forgery. Why on earth were they sent in Scotch? Surely Elizabeth was better acquainted with the French of the alleged originals. The alleged originals were examined by the English Privy Council and Lords on December 14 and 15. But were the Letters honestly and carefully compared with undeniable writings by Mary? We have the Journals of the Proceedings, 'altered and interlined by Cecil' (Henderson, p. 186). Writing on December 14, Cecil says, or the Journal says, that the Letters 'were duly conferred and compared for the manner of writing and fashion of orthography' with letters of Mary's 'long since heretofore written.' A graphologist will tell us that the more closely the later Letters, written in mental stress and after much sickness and suffering, resembled letters indited 'long since heretofore,' the more suspicious is the resemblance. Evidence as to handwriting is always dubious, and, of course, no expert was present. The forged letters of Mr. Parnell easily took in Mr. Parnell's unlucky accusers. Now on December 15 a number of other documents were hastily examined. Cecil says in the Journal, December 15, that '*of all those foresaid writings, there was no special choyse nor regard had to the order of the producing thereof, but, the whole writings lying together on the counsel table, the same were one after another showed rather by hap, as the same did ly upon the table, than with any choyse made, as by the nature therof, if time had so served, might have been.*' A pleasant, easy method of trying the honour of a woman and a prisoner! 'If time had so served' is good. But does '*all those foresaid writings*' (December 15) include the Letters of Mary, examined on December 14? This may be, and is, debated; I leave the question open. The whole result was that the Commissioners, acting as Elizabeth desired, deemed it inconsistent

with her spotless honour to admit Mary to a personal interview, 'to come into her presence.'

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One tiny circumstance has still to be mentioned. Letter 2, from Glasgow, is the most damning. Now, on December 14, was read by the Commission 'the confession and deposition of Thomas Craufurd.' This man was with Darnley in Glasgow when Mary was in his company there. The Glasgow Letter (No. 2) contains a report made in French, by Mary, to Bothwell, of a long conversation between herself and Darnley. Craufurd's deposition contains what purports to be a report of the same conversation, as communicated by Darnley to him. Now Mary's report, originally in French, corresponds almost verbally and very minutely to Craufurd's Scotch report of Darnley's report. The two may be read, in parallel columns, in Mr. Skelton's *Maitland of Lethington*. No one can appreciate the weight of these facts without reading the two reports. No jury could possibly come to any conclusion except that this part of the letter and Craufurd's deposition are very slightly varied copies of the same document. Either Mary's letter is forged on the basis of Craufurd's, or Craufurd's deposition is based on Mary's letter. Mr. Henderson suggests that 'the details of the interview were photographed on her mental retina' (phonographed on her mental tympanum he means) 'with peculiar distinctness.' This would not do with a jury. Mr. Henderson himself admits that Craufurd may 'have refreshed his recollection by aid of the letter.' A pretty way of procuring evidence! There are a dozen other suspicious points about this letter. One thing is certain: the evidence was deliberately doctored. Consequently, the whole collection of documents, which had lain for eighteen months in the hands of Morton, is under suspicion.

* * *

Suppose that Mary's honour were not in question. Suppose the events to have occurred last year, and to implicate a frisky modern matron. We see only too many cases of such matrons. We see, also, in modern times, how people will cleave to the belief in a lady's innocence, in face of the verdict of a jury. One example, of a poisoning case, is familiar. For my own part, I think it very likely that the interesting Mary did write the Letters, or some of them, but at the same time I cannot but see that the Glasgow Letter had been tampered with. And I do not think

that Mary's case had a fair trial, whether by her own fault, as may be urged, or not. Her case is parallel to Elizabeth's, in regard to the murder of Amy Robsart, Dudley's wife. According to the Spanish ambassador, Cecil told him that Amy was to be poisoned. Then Elizabeth told him that Amy was 'dead, or nearly dead.' Then came news that Amy had fallen down stairs and broken her neck. Of course I do not believe that Elizabeth had any concern with Amy's death, but, if Elizabeth had been a prisoner in Scotland, practically tried in her absence, then things might have looked badly for her. Especially had the Catholic cause triumphed in this country, we might have heard much arguing about Elizabeth's guilt or innocence. Sides would have been taken, as we were more or less interested in one lady or the other. Help it we cannot; history will continue to be written on personal prepossessions. In this case, I am only arguing that Mary *had* a case which may be disputed about with sincerity. I think she was guilty, I do not think her guilt is demonstrated. Nor, if she was guiltless, do I think we need condemn Elizabeth utterly. Elizabeth finds some documents ready to her hand. They are, at the lowest, compromising documents. Nobody can say that they were examined as the Parnell forgeries were examined. They afford Elizabeth an excuse for the only convenient policy. She makes them an excuse for that policy. Would many politicians of her time have acted otherwise? I cannot conceive that her professional conscience, as a ruler in that age, accused her; probably it acquitted her. Little as I love her, I do not see that, even if the documents were not wholly authentic, she can be called worse than her neighbours. Had Elizabeth been an ideally frank and loyal character, she would have said, 'These documents are compromising, but the whole conduct of gentlemen,—many of whom, I gather, were in a "band" for Darnley's murder, as for many another murder, and who now accuse their sovereign of the same offence, who recommended her to marry Bothwell, and now charge her with that sin,—is *louche*. I like not Bardolph's security, Will!' And she would have let Mary go free, her cousin and her suppliant, who came to her Royal hearth, and whom she gave over to death, as she procured the betrayal of The Percy. Had Mary been an ideal character, she would have said to her nobles at Craigmillar, 'My lords, who touches the king touches me! Fool, fribble, traitor, and cowardly assassin, he is still my husband.' And she would once more have stood between the victim and the murderers, as

she had stood before between Rizzio and the daggers of Darnley and Ruthven. These lines of conduct would have been magnificent, but not politic. Neither Mary nor Elizabeth took the ideal course: the only other course was not of high moral distinction. One is rather more inclined to surmise that Mary would have shown chivalry had she been in Elizabeth's place, than that Elizabeth would have come scatheless through the inextricable toils which beset Mary. But she assuredly would never have married Bothwell.

* * *

America need not struggle to produce a comic paper while she possesses the *Critic*. For misprints there never was such a merry journal as this cultivated organ, and when an American gentleman or lady of letters comes to write about Golf in the *Critic* the fun is almost too wild. But an 'obituary notice' should not be facetious. The *Critic* republishes thus some remarks from the *Tribune* on the late Mr. —. Residence in Paris 'had made — vardier, with shaved cheeks, close-cropped hair, spiked moustache, an invaluable correspondent. In appearance he was a typical *boule-pince-nez*, and full, flat-brimmed hat.' A typical *boule-pince-nez*! What a description of a man of letters and a scholar! Of course one can disintegrate and reconstruct the original description, but why should a journal of literature flaunt 'pie,' as printers call it, before its readers? Reviewing Sir Walter Simpson's artless work on the 'Art of Golf,' a writer in the *Critic* discovers that golf 'is a sort of expanded and glorified "shinny" (shinty?) minus the shins, and occupies the nimble-footed gentry often from morning to night on the heathery hills.' What can the Being who wrote this have had in its mind? Golf is no more hockey than it is Egyptology. There is a heathery hole, now 'minus' the heather, at St. Andrews, but who, beyond the Braids, plays golf on 'heathery hills'? Golf 'is an open-air game' (so far the description, by a miracle, is correct—golf is not a parlour game) 'requiring some dexterity, careful calculations of goals' (here football intrudes) 'and blows' (boxing is introduced), 'economy of effort, and indifference to weather. Its introduction into this country might not be amiss.' Indeed it might not, but a reviewer might also, without being 'amiss,' read the book he is reviewing and find out that golf is *not* 'shinny,' is not played on 'heathery hills' (as a rule), and demands considerable liberality of effort rather than

nimbleness of foot. O skipper of the *Arethusa*! (or was it the *Cigarette*, for I have not *An Inland Voyage* handy for reference)! O thou who didst draw forth the Exile of Samoa from a Gallic *cachot*, into what hands hast thou fallen? And the *Critic* writes concerning 'A War Correspondent,' and, on the whole (though a most useful serial), should look after its proof-sheets.

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Some time ago a prize of considerable value was offered for an answer to the question, 'What was the great battle won by the Scotch over the English which the Scotch have forgotten?' A gentleman of Yorkshire carried off the reward: *no* Scotch correspondent has come near the correct answer. They may resume their studies. Correspondents are also implored not to write saying that Shakespeare was not at Elizabeth's court in 1568, as may be inferred from a remark here on the Casket Letters. It is a poetical license. I have left date of publication of Morton's declaration open, 1882, or 1889, because Bresslau quoted it in 1882, while Mr. Henderson gave it at length, in 1889.

A. LANG.

